

CRITICISMS OF LINCOLN
FROM LINCOLN 6023

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CRITICISMS

Criticism of Abraham Lincoln

Criticism from *Lincoln Lore*

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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Lincoln Lore

October, 1975

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month
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Number 1652

A VIEW OF LINCOLN FROM A HOUSE DIVIDED (Cont.)

... there is not one of us that cherish an unkind thought or feeling toward him and for this reason we feel as acutely every remark derogatory to him, except as a President. I never go in Public that my feelings are not pounded or are we exempt in Matt's own home for people constantly wish he may be hung & all such evils may attend his footsteps. We would be devoid of all feeling or sympathy did we not feel for them & had we no love for *Mary*, would love or respect her as the daughter of a Father much loved & whose memory is fondly cherished by those who were little children when he died I wish I were not so sensitive but it is *decided weakness* of the entire family and to struggle against it seems for naught...[.]

One detects an undertone of feeling that he had been properly chastised—perhaps in his switch from the overly familiar “Abe” to “Mr. Lincoln”—in Dawson’s reply: “I am really glad that you have such feelings about Mr Lincoln—I have never been able to entertain for him any unkindness, save as an enemy to my country—I have never believed the slanders up-

on him as a man—and accord to him the respect that is due a gentleman—It would indeed be strange if you felt otherwise, & did not love your sister ... [.]”

Despite granting President Lincoln the ultimate compliment available in N. H. R. Dawson’s vocabulary, calling him a “gentleman,” the Alabama soldier could not help interpreting the Lincoln administration from his own Southern aristocratic viewpoint. For a long time, Dawson thought that Lincoln would be unable to prosecute the war as soon as Northern society realized the expense involved in raising armies. “It is thought,” Dawson reported to Elodie, “that the financial difficulties of Mr Lincoln will be so great as to embarrass the plans of the campaign—I hope that the Capitalists will not be willing to open their coffers to his draughts. Our Armies will fight without pay ... [.]” Dawson was

clearly a believer in the Southern picture of the North as a dollar-conscious Yankee kingdom of selfish grab and gain. Romantically, he believed the South so untainted by materialism that even the common soldiers would fight without pay. Despite being a politician himself, Dawson’s aristocratic ideal of politics ruled out party ambition (hence his father’s refusal to serve, though he was a better lawyer than Rhett and Barnwell, famous South Carolina political leaders). He thought in July of 1861, that “Mr Lincoln should now rise above party & give peace to the country—but I fear he will not be equal to the position— He is too much a party man— I say this, my own dear girl, knowing how you feel, & with no idea that it will give you pain ... [.]”

Elodie Todd replied to Dawson’s cautious defamation of Lincoln’s political character in a none-too-protective way:

I do not think of peace and know well Mr Lincoln is not *man enough* to dare to make it, he is but a tool in the hands of his Party and would not brave their wrath by such a proposition, how nobly he could redeem himself if he had the cour-

age he is no more fitted for the office than many others who have recently occupied it and we may date our trouble from the time when we allowed *Party* to place in the chair a President entirely disregarding his *worth* ability or capacity for it, and I hope our Confederacy may guard against it ... [.]

Mary Todd’s sister then revealed the strength of family ties in the aristocratic Todd clan by admitting her double standard for judging the Todd family:

I could not be offended at your remarks concerning Mr L— Knowing they were not intended more for him than for his party or than for any other *Blk Rep. President*, and you do not say as much as I do, tho’ that is a privilege I allow myself exclusively, to abuse my relations as much as I desire but no one else can do the same before me or even say a word against



Courtesy Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill
FIGURE 1. N. H. R. Dawson

Kentucky.

By and large, Elodie Todd and N. H. R. Dawson as well were true to this standard—even to the extent of disbelieving anything they read in the newspapers which reflected poorly on Mary Todd. On July 22, 1861, she wrote one of the harshest appraisals of Mary Todd that appears anywhere in her correspondence.

I see from today's paper Mrs. Lincoln is indignant at my Brother David's being in the Confederate Service and declares "that by no word or act of hers would he escape punishment for his treason against her husband's government should he fall into their hands"—I do not believe she ever said it—and if she did & meant it she is no longer a Sister of mine, nor deserves to be called a woman of nobleness & truth & God grant my noble & brave hearted brother will never fall into their hands & have to suffer death *twice over*, and he could do nothing which would make *me prouder of him*, than he is doing now *fighting for his country*, what would she do to me do you suppose, I have so much to answer for?

Her fiancée replied with a letter which indicates that Dawson might have been less restrained in his appraisal of Lincoln had he not felt that he must be careful of Elodie's touchy Todd family pride:

I do not believe that Mrs Lincoln ever expressed herself, as you state, about your brother David.—If she did, it is in very bad taste, and in worse temper— and unlike all the representations I have seen of her character— But you will learn, my dearest, that a wife, soon becomes wrapped up in the fortunes of her husband & will tolerate in her relations no opposition to his wishes . . . [.]

Was Dawson hinting that Elodie might some day sever her loyalties from the Todd family and share a more "objective" view of the narrow party politician in the White House?

If Dawson thought so, he was quite wrong. In a dramatic episode, Elodie proved her loyalty to the Todd family name. In December of 1861, Selma citizens staged a "Tableau," a sort of costume charade in which living people staged a motionless picture, to raise money for a local regiment. Elodie was invited and intended to go, until she saw the programme:

. . . I see my Brotherinlaw Mr Lincoln is to be introduced twice I have declined as all my feeling & self respect have not taken wings & flown. I must confess that I have never been more hasty or indignant in my life than since the last step has been taken. What have we done to deserve this attempt to personally insult & wound our feelings in so public a manner. We have suffered what they never have and perhaps never will in severing ties of blood . . . [.] Dr. Kendree and Mrs Kendree last summer proposed that in one of the Tableaux we should introduce the two Scenes which they propose entertaining their audience with Tuesday night and I then in their *own home* showed the indignation that I felt at a proposition made to wound me. . . [they wished] Mr Lincoln would be *caught & hung* . . . that was enough but I feel I can never feel kindly again toward those who take part in this, you do not know all we have taken from some of the people of this place, no not one half and *pride* has kept us from shewing them what we felt, I am afraid I shall never love Selma and I feel thankful that I am not dependent on its inhabitants for my happiness, hereafter I will stay to myself and keep out of the . . . way of those to whom my presence seems to be obnoxious . . . [.]

Elodie did stay home and apparently suffered a period of ostracism which severed her relations with her neighbors in Selma. Dawson tried to smooth over the difficulty as well as he could, explaining that Lincoln had become the "personification" of the enemy, but Elodie continued to complain bitterly about Selma, much to Dawson's obvious irritation. Todd family pride was a powerful force.

The Todd Family: A Startling Revelation

Most historians have assumed that Mary Todd Lincoln took an interest in political affairs that was extraordinary for a woman in her day because politics had been such a large and natural part of the Todd family life. Her father, Robert S. Todd, had been a politician himself. Lexington, though not the state capital, was an intensely political town because one of its citizens, Henry Clay, was a long-time contender for the United States Presidency. Todd was apparently associated with local men of ambition who wished to see Clay become President. As William Townsend has shown, Todd was involved in bitter political disputes because he supported the 1833 Kentucky law forbidding the importation of slaves into the state for purposes of sale. Some supporters of the law, written at the height of anti-slavery feeling within the South itself, argued that, without fresh infusions of black population, the slave power in the state would wither and eventually emancipate the slaves. Powerful pro-slavery interests in the state fought for the repeal of the nonimportation law and gained it just before Todd's death. When he ran for office, Todd received the bitter denunciation of the pro-slavery interests for being what he was not, an emancipationist. Thus Mary and the other Todd children knew the bitterness of politics as well as the satisfactions of being a family thought worthy of representing their community's political interests. Nevertheless, it is assumed that Mary gained a love of politics from the partisan milieu of her early life.

N. H. R. Dawson debated, while in the army, whether he should become a politician or devote himself to law practice when he ended his tour of duty. In May of 1861, he asked his fiancée what her feelings were about his future career. Dutifully, Elodie replied that she would be content with either choice. "One might suppose," she said, "to behold Mr Lincoln's Political career that my family would be content with Politics I am used to such a life My Father having followed such a one himself." When he asked again, he got a very different answer from Robert S. Todd's young daughter:

As to a Political life I think almost any choice preferable and more conducive to happiness, it is a life of trials vexations & cares, and in the end a grand disappointment to all the [illeg.] & purposes of the Politician himself & of his friends, that [there ?] are a few empty honors [nor] do they compensate when gained, for the trouble of a laborious life to please the World, which does indeed turn every day your friends today, your foes tomorrow, ready to tarnish your fair name with any untruth that will serve to promote party purposes. I know my Father's life was embittered after the selection of a Political life was made by his friends for him & he accepted it and after all the sacrifices he made for them & to acquire for himself Fame & a name which lived only a few years after he slumbered in his grave, and it was well he did not live longer to plunge deeper in for every other life had lost its charm and there was but the one that added he thought to his happiness. Yet I am wrong I expect to judge all by the few I have known to be otherwise than happy in such a choice, as much depends upon disposition and any life may have proved to have had the same effect . . . [.]

This is a remarkable letter which ones does not know quite how to interpret. It is, in the first place, the letter of a seventeen-year-old girl. It is, in the second place, the letter of a girl who was but five years old when her father died. Therefore, it is not altogether to be trusted.

Nevertheless, it is a unique view of a family which has remained shrouded in mystery and deserves careful consideration. It is unclear whether Robert S. Todd was truly embittered before his death (though Elodie says so) or whether the family projected their own bitterness, derived from the speed with which his fame faded after his death, onto their memory of Robert Todd. Such an interpretation would be congruent

with Elodie's statement that what name he gained faded quickly after his death and with the fact that she surely learned of this bitterness from her family long after her father's death. Probably a girl of five was unable to understand a bitterness bred of political chicanery.

Whether Elodie's view of politics and of her father's political career should cause us to reevaluate Mary Todd's alleged love of politics is a still more difficult question. Mary left home before her father engaged in the heated campaign for the state senate in 1845, in which Todd denounced his opponent as a man in a "fit of malice and desperation," "an habitual and notorious falsifier, an unscrupulous and indiscriminate calumniator, reckless alike of fame, of honor, and of truth," and a "miserable old man" who engaged in "unprovoked assaults, unfounded charges and illiberal insinuations." She was away in Springfield when her father was called by his opponent a "weak and vicious" man of "craven spirit" who worked as a legislator in the lower house to gain favors for the Branch Bank of Kentucky of which Todd was himself the president. Moreover, Robert S. Todd died in the midst of a campaign for reelection to the Kentucky Senate, and those of his family who were with him may somehow have blamed the campaigning for killing him. Especially to a child of five, it may have seemed as though whatever it was that took the father away from the house all the time on business (campaigning) simply took him away forever. From all these feelings and emotions Mary Todd Lincoln could well have

been quite immune. She may therefore have imbibed a love of politics from the early career of a father whose later career and death in the midst of campaigning left younger members of the family bitter about the profession of politics.

Other intimate glimpses of the Todd family provide interesting food for thought. Dawson seems to have been a devout man who took his Episcopalianism seriously as religion and not merely as a badge of his status in Southern society. He was distressed that Elodie, although she attended church, was not a full-fledged member. Elodie's professions of lack of adequate faith sound a bit perfunctory, but the subject appeared often enough in her letters to indicate genuine concern. "It was not necessary," she told her fiancée in a typical passage, "for you to ask me to pray for you as I have not allowed a day to pass without doing so, nor will not, altho' my prayers may not be heard & I regret each day more & more that I am not a good christian, as such my prayers might be of some avail, but I fear the life I have lead, does not entitle me to hope for much and it is so hard to be good. . . ." Dawson was quite concerned, and her reluctance in the face of urgings like this one surely betokened serious thought on the subject: ". . . I know that you have all the purity—all the essential qualifications—that would authorize you to take this step—that you are in all things, save the public confession—a christian . . . [.] There may have been some religious confusion among all the Todd children. Elodie's mother took her to the Presbyterian Church, but Elodie had gone to the Episcopal



FIGURE 2. The Todd home in Lexington is to be restored soon.

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Church at some time in her past. It will be remembered that Mary Todd Lincoln became a Presbyterian after her original Episcopalian affiliations. Elodie's confusion was doubtless increased by the fact that Dawson would have preferred her choosing the Episcopal Church, though he most wanted her to choose to make a full commitment for *some* church.

Elodie Todd's letters also seem to indicate that the family was a close-knit and happy one. "We have always been happy together," she told Dawson, "and never known what the feeling was that prompted others to always seek happiness away from home, and to feel miserable when compelled to remain there." Of course, Elodie did not have the experience Mary had, of gaining a new mother who was disliked by Mary's own grandmother. For Elodie, though, there was only one problematical member of the family.

Dr. George Todd is my Father's youngest son by his first marriage, but an almost total stranger to me for in my whole life I have never seen him but twice, the first time he was a practicing Physician, the next after my Father's death and owing then to some unpleasant family disturbances, there has never since existed between the older members of my family and himself & his older brother the same feeling as before or that is felt for our sisters I was too young at the time to even understand why the feeling was. When he called on [brother] David in Richmond, David would not see him or recognize him this I feel sorry for and hope they will yet make friends . . . [.]

It was little wonder that the other Todd children hated George. Robert S. Todd had written a will, but George contested it successfully on the technical grounds that there was only one witness to the document. This was a direct blow at Robert S. Todd's widow and the second batch of children because it meant the bulk of the estate, instead of passing to Mrs. Todd, had to be liquidated and divided among all the children. It speaks well for Mrs. Todd's restraint or for Elodie's loyalty to the family name that the young girl was seemingly unaware of what George had done and hoped there would be a reconciliation between him and other members of the family. Otherwise, Elodie made no distinctions in sisterly affection for all the children, whether by the first or second marriage.

It is somewhat surprising to find a member of the Todd family so violently anti-English as Elodie was. It was almost more than she could bear to have to hope that England would intervene in the Confederacy's behalf. On February 1, 1862, she wrote Dawson that she wished "we would have Peace or that France & England would recognize us, if they intend to, I confess I have little patience left, and wish we could take our time in allowing them to recognize the Confederate States. I hope they will pay for their tardiness in giving an enormous price, but I should not be so *spiteful*, but I never could tolerate the English and will not acknowledge like some members of the Family that [we] are of English descent, I prefer being *Irish* and certainly possess some Irish traits. . . ." Not only does this passage inform us of a peculiar difference of opinion within the family in regard to England, it also reminds us of what is easy to forget: Confederate diplomacy was unnatural. Southerners, at least the Presbyterian ones, hated England as much as Northerners did, and their desire for rescue by England was pure expedience. It showed in the King Cotton theory of diplomacy as well: it was surely an odd way to make friends with England by denying her the Southern cotton she needed for her mills.

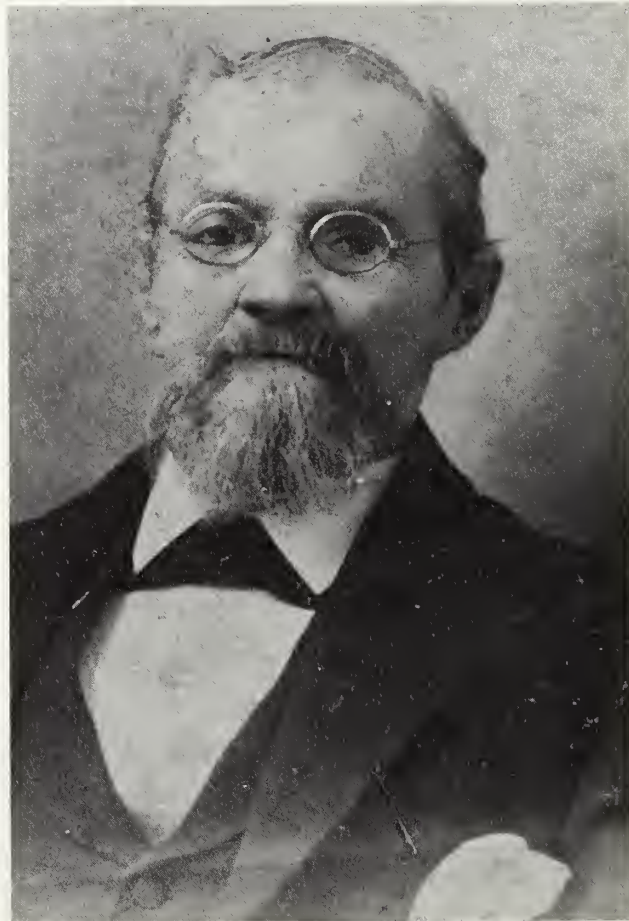
Only part of Elodie's alienation from Selma, Alabama, stemmed from her feud over the proper limits for criticizing her brother-in-law. Elodie considered herself a Kentuckian, and she had trouble all along developing any enthusiasm for her fiancée's home town in Alabama. She suffered agonies over Kentucky's reluctance to secede and join the other Confederate states. She delivered tongue-lashings to those Alabamans unlucky enough to criticize Kentucky in her pre-

sence, and she followed the career of Kentucky's John C. Breckinridge closely. Whether all the Todd children felt such an intense identification with their native state is an interesting question with interesting implications. Might Abraham Lincoln's Kentucky background have been more important to Mary Todd than we have previously realized?

EPILOGUE

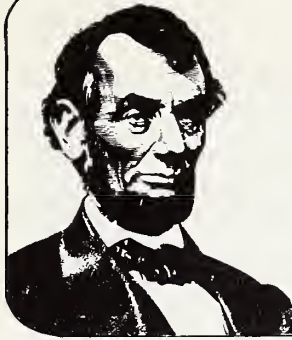
N. H. R. Dawson reenlisted once his original term of service was up. He led a cavalry unit in the late part of the war. Elodie chided herself for her selfishness in wishing that he would stay home and realized that she must not interfere with her husband's sense of duty to Alabama and the Confederacy. Dawson must hardly ever have been at home in the early period of their marriage, for he attended sessions of the state legislature and led the cavalry when the legislature was in recess.

Mrs. Dawson made other adjustments to her husband's ways. She lived in Selma the rest of her life. She must also have made her peace with Mr. Dawson's interest in politics, for he never ceased to dabble in politics. She never repudiated her identification with Southern interests or her secessionist sympathies. She became a leader of the movement to erect a Confederate monument in Selma's Live Oak Cemetery. In fact, she defied her husband's dislike of female volunteer societies and became president of the Ladies' Memorial Association of Selma. One could not have predicted this assumption of leadership in Selma society in the period of her withdrawal from a society which had insulted a Todd brother-in-law. She bore N. H. R. Dawson two children. In 1877, she died and was buried near the Confederate monument she had helped to build.



Courtesy of J. Winston Coleman, Jr.

FIGURE 3. Dr. George Todd, the black sheep.



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"The Image of America in Caricature and Cartoon"

The "last few years have seen a Golden Age of American Political Cartooning," says John Culhane, writing in *The New York Times Magazine* of November 9, 1975. Those who wish to see examples of the work of this "Golden Age," cartoons and caricatures by Pat Oliphant, Tom Wolfe, David Levine, Tomi Ungerer, Paul Szep, Ben Shahn, Draper Hill, Robert Osborn, William Steig, Richard Hess, Paul Conrad, Robert Pryor, Edward Koren, and others, can do so at "The Image of America in Caricature and Cartoon," an exhibition to be seen at the Fort Wayne Public Library from February 2 through March 13, 1976. The Amon Carter Museum of Western Art in Fort Worth, Texas, famous for its Frederick Remington and Charles M. Russell paintings, put

the show together with the aid of the Swann Foundation of New York City and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The catalogue of the exhibition is published by Lincoln National Corporation in cooperation with the Amon Carter Museum and the Swann Foundation. The exhibit is being brought to Fort Wayne, after a popular showing in Fort Worth, by the Lincoln National Corporation.

The exhibition will provide an opportunity to see not only the products of this "Golden Age" but also a sampling of works representative of the two hundred-year tradition of caricature which lies behind this flowering of the art of cartoon. Of special interest to *Lincoln Lore's* readers are the cartoons and caricatures in the show which deal with Lincoln's image. Of these, four will be familiar to readers of Rufus Rockwell Wilson's, *Lincoln in Caricature: 165 Poster Cartoons and Drawings for the Press* (Elmira, New York: Primavera Press, 1945) and Albert Shaw's *Abraham Lincoln. His Path to the Presidency* (New York: Review of Reviews Corporation, 1929).

"The Political Quadrille. Music by Dred Scott" (Figure 2) is a poster cartoon published in New York in the summer of 1860. The unknown cartoonist shows the four Presidential aspirants, all pictured as men of diminutive size, dancing with partners who embarrass them politically to a fiddle tune played by a fiendishly grinning Dred Scott. Most anti-Lincoln cartoons of that election summer drew the beardless Illinois candidate as the representative of a one-issue party, the party of the black man. True to form, "The Political Quadrille" sees Lincoln's partner as a rather loose-looking

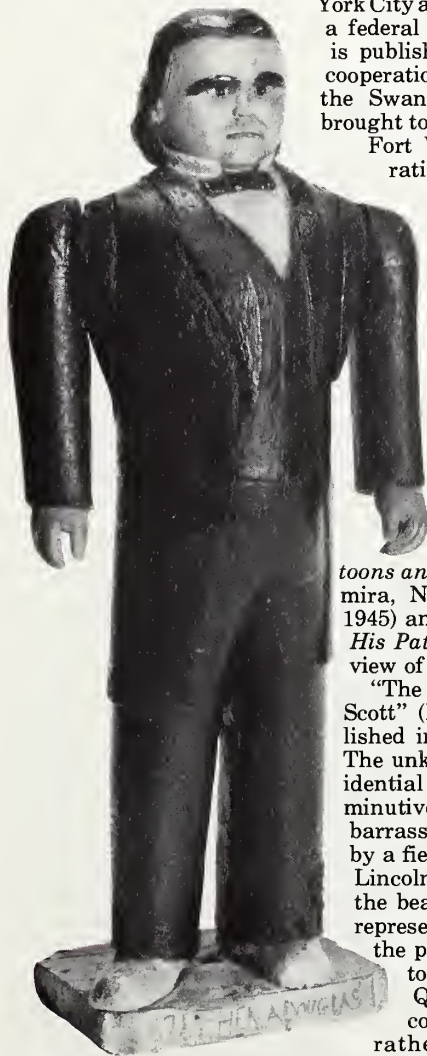


FIGURE 1. Folk sculptures of Abraham Lincoln are rare, and any sculpture of Stephen Douglas is rare. On the left, is an anonymous wood sculpture of Douglas, polychromed, 18 inches high, from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. On the right, is an anonymous wood sculpture of Lincoln, polychromed, 17 3/4 inches high, from the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. Both photographs are provided by the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.

black woman. The cartoon is impartial in its scorn, however. Constitutional Union candidate John Bell dances with an Indian. The Constitutional Union party held the remnants of the old Know Nothing or American party, and the cartoonist makes fun of their political identification with "native Americans" against immigrant Americans. Stephen Douglas dances with the traditional cartoon partner of the Democrats, a ragged and vicious-looking beggar. This harks back to the traditional rhetoric of Democratic stump speakers, in use since Andrew Jackson's war on Nicholas Biddle's Second Bank of the United States, a rhetoric which appealed to the poor and laboring classes and denounced the wealthy beneficiaries of government favoritism and paper money. It also identifies Douglas's "popular sovereignty" with "squatter sovereignty." John C. Breckinridge dances with a cloven-hoofed and horned "Old Buck," President James Buchanan, savagely drawn, for in Victorian America the sexuality of animals was often ignored in pictures.

The much cruder Cincinnati cartoon (Figure 3), published by Rickey and Mallory in August of 1860, takes a similar "plague on all your houses" approach to the election of 1860. While Douglas and Lincoln fight over the West, Breckinridge carries the South away; the overall effect, of course, is tearing the nation apart. John Bell is pictured as the candidate of the Northeast and also as the candidate who wants to save the Union; though his pot of glue is tiny, he seems to have a large supply in crates behind him. However, he stands, not on a ladder, but on an infant's high-chair; this is not a pro-Bell cartoon either. Incidentally, the map of Utah shows a man holding hands with six women—an obvious reference to Mormon polygamy. The Ohio map shows the name Spartz just above the tear; this might be the artist's signature, though the car-

toon is usually said to be anonymous.

Louis Maurer drew the pro-Lincoln "Honest Abe Taking Them on the Half Shell" (Figure 4) for Currier and Ives in September of 1860. The capable German-born cartoonist knew no smiling photographs of the Republican nominee and made Lincoln's broad grin up. This cartoon reveals that Americans knew the outcome of the election was a foregone conclusion, because the Democratic party split into pro-slavery "Hard Shells" like Breckinridge and compromising "Soft Shells" like Douglas. Both Democratic candidates had held national office in Washington for some time, and they are pictured as fat morsels which the lean Westerner (with no tie or jacket) will gobble up.

Adalbert Volck's carefully etched caricature of Lincoln as Don Quixote and Benjamin F. Butler as Sancho Panza (not pictured) does what many Civil War satirists did; it associates the sixteenth President with the most colorfully controversial Northern figure. The genius of the cartoon lies in its literary inspiration. The impossible idealist rides side by side with the earthy and sensuous Butler; a knife in the General's belt is a reference to his alleged looting of New Orleans silver chests when he ruled the conquered city.

Four other cartoons of obvious Lincoln interest are more rarely seen. "Virginia Paw-sing" (Figure 5), a cartoon published in Richmond, seems to be urging Virginia to secede, for by pausing she will be pawed by the cat, Uncle Abe, while the first seven states to secede (led by South Carolina) escape. Stephen Douglas (identified by his statement, "the Union must and shall be preserved") is the dead rat. As Lincoln mauls Virginia, he mouths bland words indicating that no one is being hurt, echoes of the words he spoke to the Ohio legislature on February 13, 1861, while on his way to Wash-



Courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

FIGURE 2. *The Political Quadrille. Music by Dred Scott*, an anonymous 1860 lithograph, 12 3/4 x 17 7/8 inches, is provided by the Library of Congress.



FIGURE 3. *Dividing the National Map*, a lithograph published by Rickey, Mallory & Company in 1860, 13 11/16 x 19 1/4 inches, is provided by The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

FIGURE 4. *Honest Abe Taking Them on the Half Shell*, a Currier and Ives lithograph drawn by Louis Maurer, 13 9/16 x 18 1/16 inches, is also from the collection of The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.



Courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

ington as President-elect. Lincoln was trying to cool the atmosphere of crisis by saying that there was as yet, despite secession, no armed conflict or physical violence:

It is a good thing that there is no more than anxiety, for there is nothing going wrong. It is a consoling circumstance that when we look out there is nothing that really hurts anybody. We entertain different views upon political questions, but nobody is suffering anything. This is a most consoling circumstance, and from it we may conclude that all we want is time, patience and a reliance on that God who has never forsaken this people.

Two drawings from the Lilly Library at Indiana University in Bloomington are one-of-a-kind views of Lincoln. The Confederate cartoon drawn in Richmond on January 14, 1863 (Figure 6), shows Lincoln as a monkey who issues the Emancipation Proclamation. The other sketch (Figure 7) associates Lincoln with Butler again; this time Lincoln prepares to carve Butler up in order to send him several places at once. From the knowing smile on Lincoln's face, one may surmise that the cartoonist sees Lincoln as a shrewd politician who destroys the controversial Butler by flattering him that he is too valuable to remain in one place.

In Figure 8, a Philadelphia lithographer draws John Wilkes Booth as he looked in a widely circulated photograph but adds a Deringer and a tempting devil to the pose. One wonders who would have wished to buy such a picture to hang in his home.

The statuette of Lincoln on the cover (Figure 1) is an anonymous wood sculpture from the collection of the Missouri Historical Society. It is more folk art than caricature, and the sculptor was careful to place a Bible at Lincoln's hand. The barrel-chested Douglas (Figure 1) comes from the Smithsonian's fabulous National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.

There is nothing like seeing these objects first hand, but, for those who cannot attend the exhibition, a 192-page hard-bound catalogue illustrating all 263 cartoons and caricatures is available for eight dollars from:

Ann Sanderson
LNSC Sales Supply
Lincoln National Corporation
1301 South Harrison Street
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Checks should be made payable to Lincoln National Corporation.



▲ Courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

FIGURE 5. *Virginia Paw-sing*, an anonymous 1861 lithograph, 8 1/2 x 14 inches, bearing the inscription "Crehen Richmond Va," is from the collection of The Chicago Historical Society.

FIGURE 6. This pencil sketch on paper is attributed to David H. Strother. Dated January 14, 1863, it is 8 13/16 x 5 1/4 inches and can be found at The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas



FIGURE 7. *Lincoln, You'll excuse me Gen. Butler, but as I cant send you everywhere at once, I'll have to take you to pieces.* This pencil sketch on paper is attributed by the Amon Carter Museum to Thomas Nast on the basis of comparison of style. The 5 7/8 x 6 11/16-inch drawing is at The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

FIGURE 8. *Satan Tempting Booth to the Murder of the President* is a lithograph by J. L. Magee of Philadelphia. Done in 1865, it is 10 1/2 x 8 3/4 inches and is supplied from the Collections of The Library Company of Philadelphia.



Courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

Courtesy Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas



SATAN TEMPTING BOOTH TO THE MURDER OF THE PRESIDENT
CHAS. FOR. HARRIS DEL.



Lincoln Lore

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DID LINCOLN CAUSE LOGAN'S DEFEAT?

Until the birth of the Republican party, Illinois was a Democratic state. When Abraham Lincoln served in the United States House of Representatives (1847-1849), he was the lone Whig from Illinois, and his Seventh Congressional District gained the reputation of being the banner Whig district in the state. In the next Congress, Illinois again sent only one Whig, but this man, Lincoln's friend Edward D. Baker, won in another district. The Seventh fell to the Democrats in the congressional election following Lincoln's election. Another friend of Abraham Lincoln, former law partner Stephen Trigg Logan, was the Whig candidate who went down to defeat in the Seventh Congressional District, and many historians have said that the burden of Congressman Lincoln's unpopular record of opposition to the Mexican War doomed Logan's chance of victory.

The dates involved in this problem are confusing to the modern reader and should be explained here before discussing the election. Doubtless many a modern voter gasped when television announcers reported, along with the results of the recent Presidential primary in Pennsylvania, that there were no less than twenty-two primaries to go before the November elections. Nineteenth-century American voters experienced a similarly endless churning of the political cauldron *every year*. There were no Presidential primaries, of course, but election dates were not systematized and elections were occurring at all times somewhere in the United States. The elections

The Field of Waterloo is ours!



THE WHIG CITADEL TAKEN!

The "Dead District" Redeemed!!

HARRIS ELECTED!!!

STATE REGISTER OFFICE, AUGUST 9.

It affords us heart-felt gratification to announce to our friends that the "dead district" is redeemed from the thralldom of whigery. Nobly have our friends performed their duty and most nobly have their gallant exertions been repaid! We can say no more now, but give a statement of the majorities below, which the official returns will not materially change. Huzza for Cass and Butler, Harris and Victory!!

	Harris.	Logan.
Putnam, - - - - -	20 maj.	-
Marshall, - - - - -	96	-
Woodford, - - - - -	190	-
Tazewell, - - - - -	-	200 maj.
Logan, - - - - -	-	10
Mason, - - - - -	116	-
Menard, - - - - -	76	-
Sangamon, - - - - -	-	263
Morgan, - - - - -	64	-
Scott, - - - - -	63	-
Cass, - - - - -	7	-
	632	473

Harris' majority 159!!

which sent Lincoln and his colleagues to the House of Representatives were held over a period of a year and three months. Lincoln's was one of the earliest. He was elected early in August of 1846, but he did not take his seat in the House until December of 1847. Louisiana, by contrast, held its election for representatives to the same Congress in November of 1847, just a month before Congress convened. There were not even standardizations by region. Though Lincoln was elected in August of 1846, neighboring Indiana chose Lincoln's Hoosier colleagues a full year later, in August of 1847.

Stephen Logan's ill-starred election day, then, was August 7, 1848. Three months later Illinois voters returned to the polls to select a President of the United States, either Democrat Lewis Cass or Whig Zachary Taylor. Congressman Abraham Lincoln remained in Washington after Congress adjourned on August 14, 1848, to help the Whig Central Committee with the national Whig campaign. Illinois Whigs chose him as an Assistant Elector on August 23, 1848. This meant that he had been chosen to make speeches in Taylor's behalf in Illinois. Despite the choice as Assistant Elector, Congressman Lincoln remained in Washington throughout August and travelled to Massachusetts in September to campaign for Taylor. Time was growing short to fulfill his duties as Assistant Elector in Illinois, so Lincoln went directly to Albany from Massachusetts, and then to Buffalo, from which he took a steamer across the Great Lakes to Illinois. By October 6, he was delivering a

Courtesy Illinois State Historical Library

speech in Chicago. On October 10, 1848, he arrived in Springfield to campaign for Taylor in his own district. By the first week in December, Congressman Lincoln had returned to Washington to attend the short (or lame-duck) session of Congress. This session met before the President (elected in November) took office on March 5, 1849 (normally, the date was March 4, but in 1849 that day was a Sunday and therefore unsuitable for the inaugural ceremonies).

The local Democrats were jubilant when Logan lost to Thomas L. Harris. Immediately, they crowed that Lincoln's record was unpopular with the people of central Illinois. Referring to Lincoln's so-called Spot Resolutions, which had demanded that President Polk point out the specific spot of allegedly American soil on which American blood had been shed to initiate the Mexican War, the *Illinois State Register* claimed that the "spot" was at last "wiped out." "When Lincoln was elected," said the Democratic newspaper, "he made no declaration of principles in regard to the war before the people, as he himself tells us in his first speech in Congress. Therefore the people of the seventh Congressional district are not responsible for the anti-war speeches and anti-war votes" of their Whig congressman. "But," the *Register* went on, "it was otherwise in relation to Logan. He had committed himself in the legislature against the war, and his sentiments were well known to the people, — and they promptly rejected him. This proves that . . . they are patriotic, true lovers of their country."

Abraham Lincoln did not interpret the results that way, of course. Writing on August 28, 1848, to William Schouler, the editor of the Boston *Daily Atlas*, Lincoln said:

I would rather not be put upon explaining how Logan was defeated in my district. In the first place I have no particulars from there, my friends, supposing I am on the road home, not having written me. Whether there was a full turn out of the voters I have as yet not learned. The most I can now say is that a good many Whigs, without good cause, as I think, were unwilling to go for Logan, and some of them so wrote me before the election. On the other hand Harris was a Major of the war, and fought at Cerro Gordo, where several Whigs of the district fought with him. These two facts and their effects, I presume tell the whole story. That there is any political change against us in the district I cannot believe; because I wrote some time ago to every county of the district for an account of changes; and, in answer I got the names of four against us, eighty-three for us. I dislike to predict, but it seems to me the district must and will be found right side up again in November.

In a debunker's rush to judgment, historians have called this letter evasive and concluded that Lincoln was the cause of Logan's defeat.

"In the Seventh District," Albert Beveridge declared flatly, "Logan ran on Lincoln's record and was badly beaten." It "would have hurt Logan had he taken the stump for him at that time; for, . . . Lincoln's popularity at home had been seriously impaired, if indeed it were not for the moment destroyed." His reception when he did come to work for Taylor was, according to Beveridge, dismal:

Finally he reached home, but no mention of his arrival was made in any paper. What further part he took in the campaign in Illinois does not appear, except that at one meeting in a small town in Sangamon County, just before the Presidential election, the crowd was unfriendly and a Democratic speaker handled him roughly. As we have seen, Logan had been overwhelmed in the August elections. The result of Lincoln's first session in Congress had been a political revolution among his constituents, and, . . . he returned to Washington a dispirited man.

The atmosphere of rejection and isolation which Beveridge conjured up by saying that Lincoln's arrival went unnoticed, that only one recorded speech was made (and that in a

"small" town), and that Lincoln was "a dispirited man" became even more pronounced in Donald W. Riddle's *Congressman Abraham Lincoln* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957). He called the election "the ultimate repudiation of Lincoln's stand on the Mexican War—not by Democrats only, as might have been expected, but by Whigs." Although Riddle noted that Lincoln made many speeches for Taylor after his return to Illinois and the Seventh Congressional District (these had somehow escaped Beveridge's notice), he read political disaster into their reception. After giving two speeches near Springfield (in Jacksonville and Petersburg, the county seats respectively of Morgan and Menard Counties), Lincoln "beat a strategic retreat," concluding "that no good purpose was served by his continuing to speak in this part of the district." Riddle added:

What is most curious of all he made no speech in Springfield. The conclusion is inescapable. Lincoln was so unpopular in Springfield and its environs that although he was an official party spokesman it was inadvisable for him to speak there.

Lincoln left for the northern part of the district where third-party Free Soil sentiment was strong.

Why did Lincoln retreat from the Springfield area? This is Riddle's explanation:

. . . he made only two speeches in his home neighborhood. In these he was roughly handled. He spoke at Beardstown on October 19. Two days later he spoke in Jacksonville. There his platform opponent, Murray McConnel, attacked Lincoln for his war attitude, asserting that Lincoln had misrepresented his constituents. Lincoln was sufficiently stung to reply. He refused to believe that a majority of his constituents had favored the war. This was an extremely vulnerable defense, and McConnel pounced upon it: how, then, did Lincoln explain his party's defeat in the recent Congressional election? The *State Register* was informed by its Jacksonville correspondent that Lincoln was "used up" by McConnel. "Lincoln has made nothing by coming to this part of the country to make speeches," the Morgan County writer concluded.

Lincoln spoke in Petersburg, the county seat of Menard County while attending court there on October 23. This time the *State Register* claimed he was "used up" by William Ferguson. It appears that Lincoln concluded that no good purpose was served by his continuing to speak in this part of the district.

Riddle judged that Lincoln had very little clout in the north as well:

It was no encomium of his success as an Assistant Elector [that Illinois went for Cass instead of Taylor]. The vote in Putnam County [in the northern part of Lincoln's district] was despite his major argument—that slavery restriction would be furthered by electing Taylor. In view of what had occurred in Jacksonville and Petersburg Lincoln could not easily have concluded that he had won many votes for his candidate.

It should make us suspicious to find the same conclusions buttressed by the opposite evidence. Beveridge's claim that Lincoln was unpopular was based on Lincoln's delivering so few speeches for Taylor in his district. Riddle found that Lincoln did deliver many speeches in his district but concluded, if anything more tenaciously, that Lincoln was unpopular with his own constituents.

To cling to Beveridge's conclusion, then, Riddle had to do two things. First, he had to say that the speeches which newspapers reported were reported unfavorably. Second, he had to say that the unreported speeches had no political effect or the opposite political effect from that intended by Lincoln. Thus the reader learns that Lincoln was "used up" at Beardstown and Jacksonville and that he failed to stem the Free Soil tide in the north, especially in Putnam County.

The first contention is based on a hostile witness; Riddle referred to reports of speeches in Democratic newspapers. Democratic newspapers *without exception* reported that Whig speakers were "used up" by Democratic ones; Whig papers always found precisely the opposite to be the case. It was Lincoln's misfortune that only the Democratic report of his speech survived.

Riddle could still plead that he used the *only* evidence available. Such would also be his plea in the case of the speeches in the northern part of the district. There are no reports, hostile or friendly, of these speeches, so the historian must rely on the only evidence available: the results on election day as ascertained from the election statistics. The figures for the two elections are printed below:

CONGRESSIONAL (AUGUST) PRESIDENTIAL (NOVEMBER)

COUNTY	HARRIS (Dem.)	LOGAN (Whig)	CASS (Dem.)	TAYLOR (Whig)	VANBUREN (Free Soil)
Cass	656	650	724	761	11
Logan	399	417	369	465	4
Marshall	341	244	322	304	41
Mason	452	336	403	391	7
Menard	648	570	488	605	1
Morgan	1,322	1,264	1,309	1,372	139
Putnam	238	219	185	266	299
Sangamon	1,386	1,649	1,336	1,943	47
Scott	662	616	649	798	15
Tazewell	678	899	593	1,097	96
Woodford	419	231	309	166	52
	7,201	7,095	6,687	8,168	712

Lincoln did not stem the Free Soil tide in Putnam County, which went for Van Buren. However, it should be noted that all the northern counties, Putnam, Woodford, and Marshall, had the Free Soil virus, that Lincoln visited *all* of them as well as Tazewell, that Marshall and Woodford went for Cass by smaller majorities than they had gone for Harris, and that Tazewell went for Taylor by a much greater majority than it had turned out for Logan. In other words, it seems only fair to say that, whereas Lincoln may not have helped much in Putnam, he certainly did not hurt anything in Tazewell, Marshall, or Woodford.

It also seems fair to apply the same test of election results to Lincoln's speeches which were reported as disasters by the Democratic press. The fullest report stemmed from the Jacksonville speech, which was reported in this way by the *Illinois State Register*:

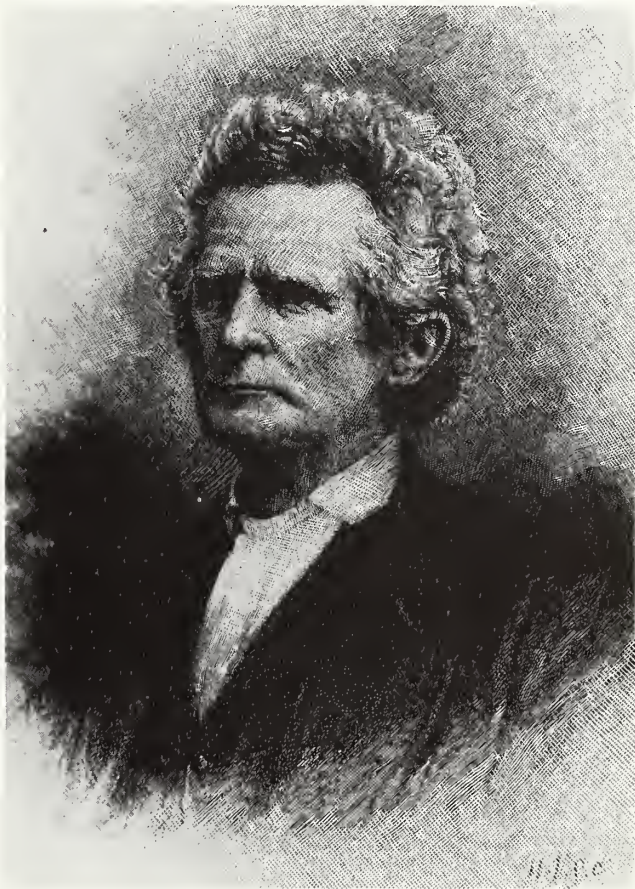
Mr. McConnel then took up a copy of the journal of the House of Representatives of Congress, of January last, and showed that Mr. Lincoln *had refused to vote for a resolution of thanks to General Taylor and his brave comrades for his and their conduct at the battle of Buena Vista, until he had first voted an amendment thereto*, that this battle was fought in a war *unconstitutionally and unnecessarily* begun by the President. He then turned to Mr. Lincoln and compared his conduct in that vote with his conduct and speeches in favor of the war, and for carrying it on with spirit and vigor before he left home and while canvassing for the office of representative in Congress. He asked if Mr. Lincoln did not know when he gave that vote that he was *misrepresenting* the wishes of the patriotic people of this district, and did he do so by the influence of Mr. Polk or some whig leader. In the midst of the shower of fire that fell around him, Lincoln cried out, "No, I did not know it, and don't believe it yet." As quick as thought McConnel pointed to the August election as an evidence that he had so misrepresented his people, and to that most foul slander upon our district was mainly owing Logan's defeat for Congress. The people were tired of having their patriotism and love of country so shamefully misrepresented by whig Congress-

man and misunderstood by the American people, and they rose in their might and cast aside the men that disregarded the wishes of those who put them in power. Lincoln crouched in silence beneath the blows that fell thick and fast around him, and his friends held down their heads in shame.

Lincoln has made nothing by coming to this part of the country to make speeches. He had better have stayed away. Riddle agreed in substance with the Democrats, though not to the extent of saying that a "shower of fire" fell around Lincoln or that he "crouched in silence."

What, though, would happen if one applied the same test to this speech that is used for Lincoln's northern tour? Jacksonville was in Morgan County. The Whigs always had factional problems in Morgan. It was the only possible challenger to Sangamon's leadership in the Seventh Congressional District, turning out only about 350 - 500 fewer votes than Sangamon's whopping 3,000 or so votes. When Harris beat Logan in August, Morgan County, which had gone for Clay over Polk in 1844, went for the Democrat by 58 votes. Lincoln visited Morgan, and it went for Taylor by 63 votes in November. It would be a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy to say Lincoln caused the change, but it at least deserves mention and the same weight assigned to the vote in Putnam after Lincoln's appearance in that county.

Ignoring all partisan evidence from Democratic newspapers and disregarding the charges of Beveridge and Riddle, one could draw a very different picture of Lincoln's relation-

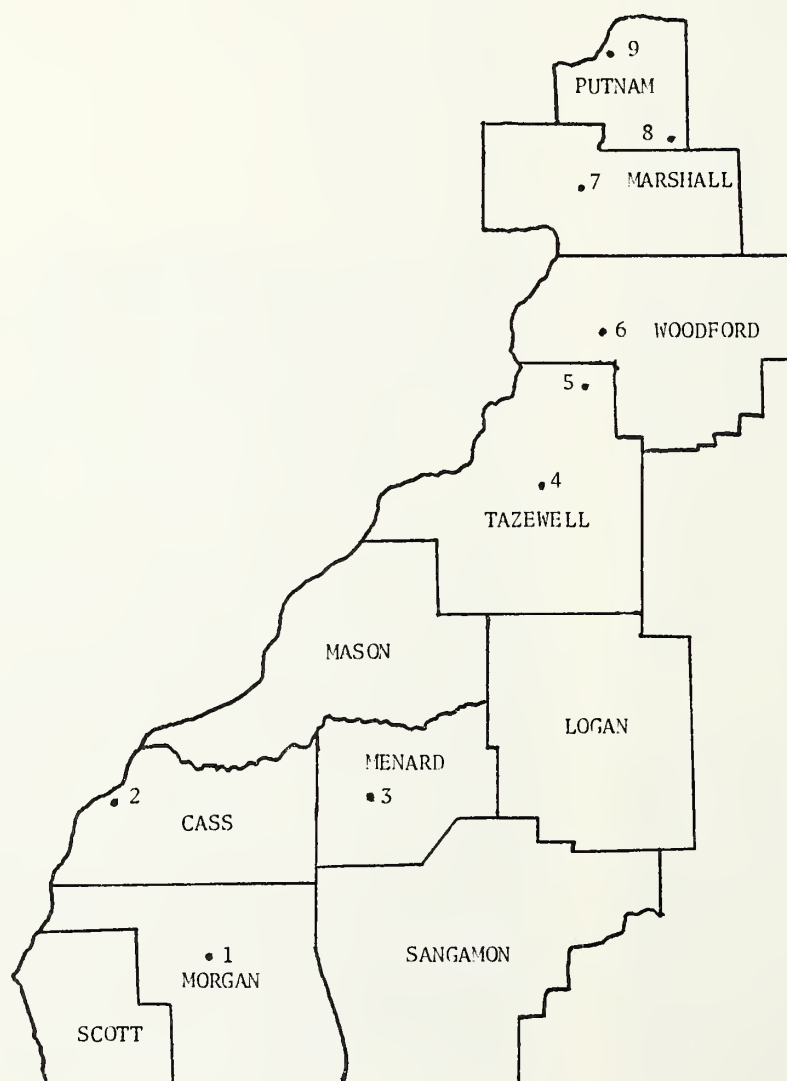


From the Lincoln National Life Foundation
Stephen T. Logan was, according to William Herndon, "small—short—thin—and squarely put up and angularly built, running in figure and features to sharp keen points, lance like . . . He is frailly built—a froth network—nervous—quick—uneasy—restless . . . his voice is sharp and shrill—'squeaky & squealy.'"

ship with his constituents. Stephen T. Logan lost the congressional election in August to war hero Thomas L. Harris. Thinking him on his way after Congress recessed on the 14th, local Whigs chose incumbent Congressman Abraham Lincoln on August 27 as Assistant Elector to make speeches in November for Zachary Taylor. Lincoln chose to work for the national campaign first and then came home in October to help out the Taylor cause in his own district. He made about eight speeches in Taylor's behalf in the district. Every county except Woodford that Lincoln visited turned out more Whig voters for Taylor than it had for Logan three months earlier. This is not necessarily proof of Lincoln's prowess as a campaigner, but it is proof of his political acumen. He had predicted in August that the upset of Logan by Harris did not indicate any permanent reversal of political fortunes for the

Seventh District's Whig majority. He knew and stated flatly that the district would be found in Taylor's column in November. What role his own speaking efforts played in this is impossible to determine, but they could hardly have been a detriment.

It is even harder to say what role Lincoln's reputation played in Logan's defeat than to say what role his presence and political activity played in Taylor's victory in the Seventh Congressional District. All that can be said, within the confines of *Lincoln Lore's* limited pages, is that there is no indication that Lincoln's physical presence in the district had any dampening effect on Whig political fortunes in October or November, 1848. One must wonder, then, how Lincoln could have been more dangerous to Whig success just three months earlier while he was hundreds of miles away in Washington.



THE SEVENTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Lincoln Campaign Speeches for Taylor, October, 1848

1. Jacksonville (MORGAN)
2. Beardstown (CASS)
3. Petersburg (MENARD)
4. Tremont (TAZEWELL)
5. Washington (TAZEWELL)
6. Metamora (WOODFORD)
7. Lacon (MARSHALL)
8. Magnolia (PUTNAM)
9. Hennepin (PUTNAM)



Lincoln Lore

March, 1977

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Number 1669

The Contents of Lincoln's Pockets at Ford's Theatre

On February 12, 1976, the Library of Congress revealed the contents of the "mystery box" containing the contents of Abraham Lincoln's pockets the night he was assassinated. The dramatic timing of the announcement — on Lincoln's birthday in the nation's bicentennial year — led to its being widely noted in the press. All over the nation people read that Lincoln had carried a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles engraved by their donor Ward Hill Lamon, another pair of folding spectacles in a silver case, an ivory pocket knife, a fancy watch fob, a large white Irish linen handkerchief with his name embroidered on it in red cross-stitch, an initialed sleeve button, and a brown leather wallet. The wallet proved to con-

tain probably the most startling item, a five-dollar Confederate note, and nine old newspaper clippings. The newspaper clippings were dismissed in the news releases with little comment beyond saying that the President could perhaps be forgiven for the minor vanity of carrying old adulatory news items in his pockets.

None of the accounts of the opening which I read — and I read several because I happened to be travelling across the country at the time and saw several different newspapers — bothered to recount even the titles of the articles from Lincoln's wallet. Curiosity was too much to bear, and I wrote the Library of Congress to find out what the articles said. They



DON'T SWAP HORSES.

JOHN BULL. "Why don't you ride the other Horse a bit? He's the best Animal."
BROTHER JONATHAN. "Well, that may be; but the fact is, OLD ABE is just where I can put my finger on him: and as for the other—though they say he's some when out in the scrub yonder—I never know where to find him."

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 1. John Bright was of a different mind, but most Americans assumed that most Englishmen, like John Bull in this 1864 cartoon from *Harper's Weekly*, supported McClellan rather than Lincoln in the election of 1864.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 2. Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887) was probably the most conspicuous clergyman of his day.

were able to produce photographs of seven of the articles; two are in too poor shape to be taken to the photographer, apparently.

I was glad I wrote when I received the photographs. Contrary to what I had been led to believe by the press coverage, only two of the articles were merely pieces of praise for the President. The other five, though they were not critical, dealt essentially with other subjects. Presumably, we may interpret these articles as indications of some of the problems which engaged the President during the last year of his administration. It would be wrong to place too much emphasis upon them just because Lincoln retained them so long (none of the clippings was from a newspaper printed immediately before the assassination). He was a man of notoriously disorderly habits whose office filing system as a lawyer had consisted of a bundle of legal papers tied together with a note written by Lincoln, "If you can't find it anywhere else look in here." Still, he showed enough initial interest to clip the articles or at least to retain them in his wallet once given them by others.

It is interesting to note the sort of praise which the President valued. Two of the clippings contained nothing but praise, it is true, but the praise came from two quarters where Lincoln had not proven popular in the past. An account of Henry Ward Beecher's address at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia told "how strong a hold the President has upon the popular heart throughout the loyal North." Beecher had written a series of editorials in 1862 which were, from his own recollection, "in the nature of a mowing-machine — they cut at every revolution — and I was told one day that the President had received them and read them through with very serious countenance, and that his only criticism was: 'Is thy servant a dog?' They bore down on him very hard." Things were very different in 1864, and Beecher told his Philadelphia audience that Lincoln's prosecution of the war had been effec-

tive. When an incidental mention of Andrew Jackson seemed to bring forth audience interest, Beecher exploited his opening by saying, "Abraham Lincoln may be a great deal less testy and wilful than Andrew Jackson, but in a long race, I do not know but that he will be equal to him." This was followed by a "storm of applause" which "seemed as if it never would cease." Philadelphia would go for Lincoln in the election of 1864, but Beecher had sensed the campaign strategy which would work in this negrophobic home of General McClellan. The stress would have to be put on Lincoln's Jacksonian qualities as a stern and uncompromising foe of separatism. The election would not be a referendum on the popularity of emancipation and the Republican platform's commitment to the Thirteenth Amendment — if it could be avoided.

A large photograph of John Bright, the British liberal, hung in the anteroom of Lincoln's office in the White House. Doubtless, the President was gratified to read the clipping about "John Bright on the Presidency." In a letter written to Horace Greeley before the election of 1864, Bright observed that "those of my countrymen who have wished well to the rebellion, who have hoped for the break-up of your Union, who have preferred to see a Southern Slave Empire rather than a restored and free Republic, . . . are now in favor of the election of Gen. McClellan." On the other hand, "those who have deplored the calamities which the leaders of secession have brought upon your country, who believe that Slavery weakens your power and tarnishes your good name throughout the world, and who regard the restoration of your Union as a thing to be desired and prayed for by all good men, . . . are heartily longing for the re-election of Mr. Lincoln." Lincoln's election would prove that republican countries could survive "through the most desperate perils."

Lincoln seems to have been taking a keen interest in the state of Confederate morale. Two of the clippings dealt with this subject. Both carried the news that disaffection among the Confederate soldiers was high. "The Disaffection Among the Southern Soldiers" republished a letter from the *Toledo Blade* which had been "picked up in the streets of Brandon, Mississippi, by Captain Dinnis, of the 62nd Ohio Regiment." Dated July 16, 1863, the letter complained of "the vacillating policy and hollow promises" by which the soldiers had been "duped so long." With no provisions prepared along the route of retreat, the army was moving slowly. The Confederates paroled at Vicksburg were deserting. "The negro emancipation policy," the letter continued, "at which we so long hooted, is the most potent lever of our overthrow. It steals upon us un-awares, and ere we can do anything the plantations are deserted, families without servants, camps without necessary attendants, women and children in want and misery. In short, the disadvantages to us now arising from the negroes are ten-fold greater than have been all the advantages derived from earlier in the war." Certainly, this was welcome vindication of Lincoln's policy of emancipation, which had been justified precisely on the grounds that it would weaken the Southern war effort.

"A Conscript's Epistle to Jeff. Davis" shows the President's interests in rather a different light. This article also purported to reprint a captured Confederate letter, but the letter was much more satirical in tone and surely spoke in part at least to Lincoln's love for rough humor. Addressing the Confederate President as "Jeff., Red Jacket of the Gulf, and Chief of the Six Nations," one Norman Harold of Ashe County, North Carolina, expressed his desire to desert the "adored trinity" of the Confederacy, "cotton, niggers, and chivalry." He denounced Davis in mock-monarchical-reverence as the "Czar of all Chivalry and Khan of Cotton Tartary," as "the illegitimate son of a Kentucky horse-thief," and as the "bastard President of a political abortion." In the end he expressed the "exquisite joy" which the soldiers would express when Davis "shall have reached that eminent meridian whence all progress is perpendicular." Surely Lincoln found in all this exaggerated bombast some gratification that his Confederate counterpart would bear the burden of outrageous vilification that Lincoln himself had on occasion to bear. Here were the same accusations of monarchical pretensions. And here were the same doubts of proper Kentucky paternity. It must have been reassuring to find that this was the token of partisan discontent and not the result of reasoned and careful

research into the biographical backgrounds of Presidents.

Lincoln also carried with him "Sherman's Orders For His March," a straightforward reprinting of the military commander's outline for his campaign. Lincoln must have realized the great importance of these orders, which constituted the beginnings of a new era in military history. General Sherman carefully instructed his army that there would be "no general trains of supplies," but each regiment would have only "one wagon and one ambulance." Each brigade would have behind it "a due proportion of ammunition wagons, provision wagons and ambulances," but the army was obviously going to travel light, for they were to "start habitually at seven a. m., and make about fifteen miles per day." To do this, the general said, the "army will forage liberally on the country during the march. To this end, each brigade commander will organize a good and sufficient foraging party, under the command of one or more discreet officers, who will gather near the route traveled corn or forage of any kind, meat of any kind, vegetables, corn meal, or whatever is needed by the command; aiming at all times to keep in the wagon trains at least ten days provisions for the command and three days forage." Sherman enjoined certain restraints upon his men: "Soldiers must not enter the dwellings of the inhabitants or commit any trespass; during the halt or a camp they may be permitted to gather turnips, potatoes and other vegetables, and drive in stock in front of their camps. To regular foraging parties must be entrusted the gathering of provisions and forage at any distance from the road traveled." Nevertheless, Sherman directly ordered the wholesale destruction of economically useful property in hostile districts:

V. To army corps commanders is entrusted the power to destroy mills, houses, cotton gins, &c., and for them this general principle is laid down: In districts and neighborhoods where the army is unmolested, no destruction of such property should be permitted; but should guerillas or bushwhackers molest our march, or should the inhabitants burn bridges, obstruct roads, or otherwise manifest local hostility, then army corps commanders should order and enforce a devastation more or less relentless, according to the measure of such hostility.

Sherman's orders even embodied a political interpretation of the nature of the conflict when they allowed the cavalry and artillery to "appropriate freely and without limit" the horses, mules, and wagons of the inhabitants — "discriminating, however, between the rich, who are usually hostile, and the poor or industrious, usually neutral or friendly." Again, he urged restraint. "In all foraging," he said, "of whatever kind, the parties engaged will refrain from abusive or threatening language, and may when the officer in command thinks proper, give written certificates of the facts, but no receipts; and they will endeavor to leave with each family a reasonable portion for their maintenance." There was no sentimentality in his provisions for coping with live contraband: "Negroes who are able-bodied and can be of service to the several columns, may be taken along; but each army commander will bear in mind that the question of supplies is a very important one, and that his first duty is to see to those who bear arms." Clearly, President Lincoln understood the nature of Sherman's epoch-making campaign well and did more than fret over whether the general would be cut off and surrounded by his bold move.

Even as late as 1864, President Lincoln remained preoccupied with the problems of the Border States and, in particular, of Missouri. Two of the clippings dealt with Missouri. "The Message of the Governor of Missouri" defended Governor Hamilton R. Gamble from charges of "copperheadism or disloyalty." Not only did his message pledge him "to support the Government with all our energies in its endeavors to suppress the rebellion in other States," but he also accepted a recent Ordinance of Emancipation "as a measure that will, in a brief period, accomplish the great object to be attained in making Missouri A FREE STATE." He also encouraged the emigration of free laborers from Europe. "If Governor GAMBLE were a Kentuckian," the newspaper remarked, "we should think him a very sound Union man. We do not know but he would be charged with being an 'Abolitionist.'" This article contained some praise for the President, because it condemned radicals who charged him with deserting the cause of

freedom for not giving in to "demands of the radicals that seemed intolerant and obtrusive." The article concluded: "The charge is unfounded and absurd. Doubtless he would rejoice as heartily as any radical, at the speedy abolition of slavery in Missouri, but he is not disposed to encourage excesses that might damage the good cause itself."

Some of the reasons for the dispute over emancipation policy in Missouri are readily apparent in another clipping from Lincoln's wallet, "Emancipation in Missouri." This article simply printed the Ordinance of Emancipation passed by the Missouri State Convention. Slavery was to end in Missouri on July 4, 1870. On that day all slaves in the state were to be free, "Provided, however, that all persons emancipated by this ordinance shall remain under the control and be subject to their late owners, or their legal representatives, as servants during the following period, to wit: Those over forty years of age, for and during their lives; those under twelve until they arrive at the age of twenty-three; and those of all other ages until the 4th of July, 1876." "Apprenticeship" was the term which was used to describe the nature of the proposed relationship between Missouri's "freedmen" and their "former" masters. However, we sometimes forget how limited a form of freedom apprenticeships can be because we use the term "apprentice" today to mean little more than "understudy." The Missouri Ordinance of Emancipation drew a good deal harsher picture: "The persons, or their legal representatives, who, up to the moment of emancipation, were owners of slaves hereby freed, shall, during the period for which the services of such freedmen are reserved to them, have the same authority and control over the said freedmen for the purpose of receiving the possessions and services of the same that are now held by the masters in respect of his slaves; provided, however, that after the said 4th of July, 1870, no person so held to service shall be sold to non-residents or removed from the state by authority of his late owner or his legal representative." In fact, then, those forty years old and above forever, children until the age of twenty-three, and everyone for at least six



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 3. John Bright (1811-1889) was a British liberal whose letters to Charles Sumner were read to President Lincoln.

years after 1870, would be serfs who could not earn the product of the sweat of their brows and whose only rights were (1) the right not to be sold to non-Missourians and (2) the right not to be removed from Missouri by their masters.

The Ordinance of Emancipation was basically Governor Gamble's plan. It was opposed by more radical Missourians who were called "Charcoals" for obvious reasons. Gamble led the opposing "Claybank" faction, so called because they were supposedly the occupants of colorless middle ground on the hot political question of slavery. Though there were some who were more conservative than Gamble — "Snowflakes," who thought slavery could somehow survive the war in Missouri, and Frank Blair, who still longed for the impossible dream of colonization, Gamble's was the conservative faction in Missouri politics at this time. It was little wonder that radical critics found his emancipation plan less than satisfactory, for it offered freedom to no one in less than twelve years from the date of the Ordinance (1864). Charcoals, though they preferred January 1, 1864 as the date of emancipation, were willing to settle for November 1, 1866. In the end, the political situation changed in Missouri, and slavery was abolished in the state in January of 1865.

Although it is true that none of the clippings was critical of President Lincoln and that all could be construed in some way as praise for him or as testimony to the success of his policies, it seems inadequate to dismiss these interesting clippings as the tokens and badges of a harmless Presidential vanity. The contents of these articles can help to illuminate the preoccupations of the mind of one of America's least confiding Presidents.

This was a man who especially valued the hard-won praise of his sometime critics. This was a man who realized the value of international opinion and who, despite his provincial background, cared for the opinions of the great world beyond the borders of the United States.

In 1864, as always, Lincoln was a man preoccupied with politics and social questions. These clippings did not contain gems of helpful political philosophy or religious musings. They show the President to have been preoccupied with what historians like James G. Randall, Reinhard Luthin, and David Donald have said he was preoccupied with, the realities of politics

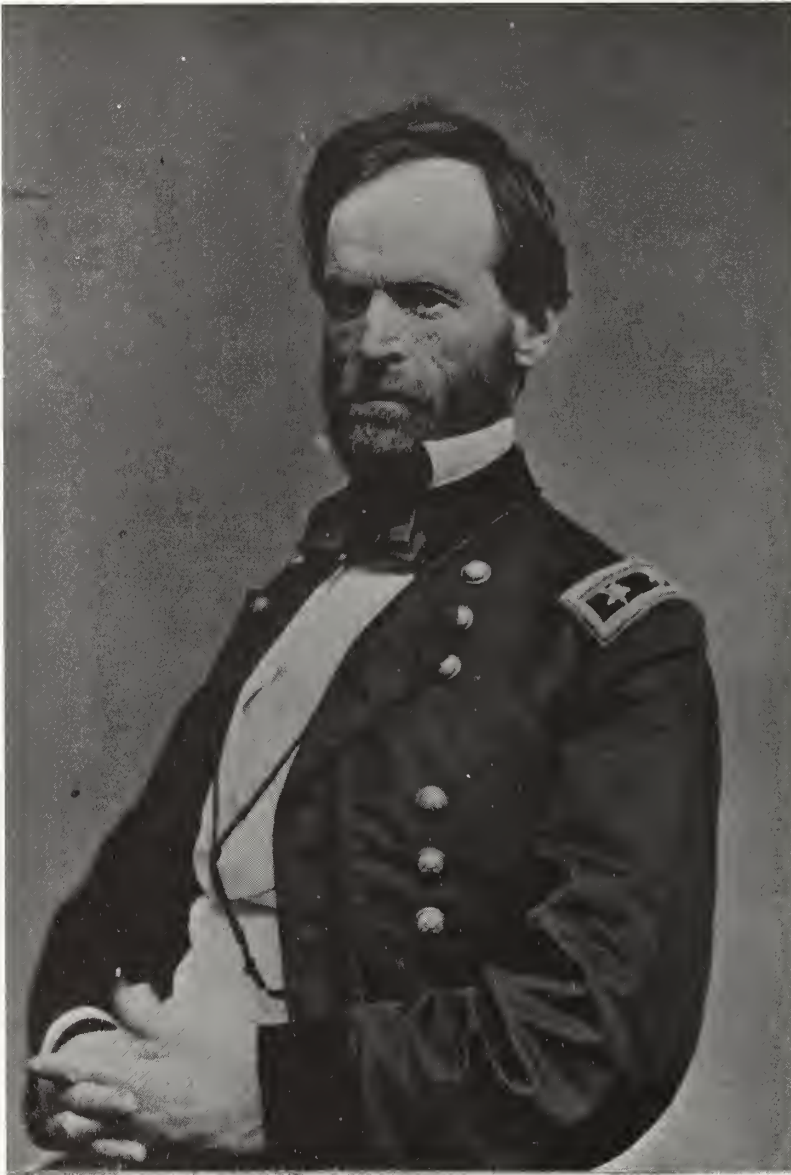
and power — the strength of the Confederacy, the success of his emancipation policy, and the never-ending factional problems of Missouri politics. This was a politician's wallet, and all we can tell of his personality from the nature of the articles is that he liked humor.

It would strain these materials too much to argue with any certainty that they show us the way the President's mind was leaning near the end of his life. Still, we cannot ignore the bearing of these articles on some of the great questions of Lincolniana. When Lincoln discussed gradual emancipation with Confederate representatives at Hampton Roads in February of 1865, did he by any chance have something as leisurely as Missouri's plan in mind? When he allowed himself to think of states of quasi-freedom like apprenticeship as sequels to slavery, was he thinking of anything as restrictive as Missouri's plan of apprenticeship? Was Lincoln's conception of warfare clearly that of Sherman as described with such clarity and force in that General's orders for the march

through Georgia? Was Lincoln not fully cognizant of the extent to which the war-nurtured passions of the North would demand some psychological satisfactions from Jefferson Davis, the "Czar of Chivalry," and the rich Southerners who allegedly led the poor and industrious Southerners into a war they cared nothing about? All of the questions of Reconstruction seem to burn through these pages with an intensity and brightness that makes clear that these questions surely were the major preoccupations of the President in 1864. The atmosphere of the Hampton Roads Peace Conference and of the early period of Reconstruction with their preoccupations with sequels to slavery and the problems of dealing with the former Confederate leaders is already in these worn fragments of newspaper articles which were found in the wallet of a President released at last from turmoil and strife on April 15, 1865.

Editor's Note: I wish to thank Mrs. Mary C. Lethbridge, Information Officer of the Library of Congress, for supplying us with photographs of the clippings in Lincoln's wallet.

J. Duane Squires of New London, New Hampshire, has caught two errors in *Lincoln Lore*. In Number 1664, Senator Hale was from New Hampshire not Maine. In Number 1667, Adams was a "Minister" not an "Ambassador," a title not created until 1893.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

FIGURE 4. General William Tecumseh Sherman (1820-1891) forbade pillaging by his soldiers when he was in command around Memphis in 1862. His decision to march through Georgia late in 1864 in order to attack the South's only untouched base of supply, Georgia, launched him to international fame. By taking the war to the civilian economy rather than simply to the lives of soldiers, he wrenched war out of its eighteenth-century assumptions and pushed it towards the twentieth century.



Lincoln Lore

October, 1977

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1676

Some Sober Second Thoughts about the New Constitutional History

In the days of Lincoln's Presidency, constitutional issues were paramount, rivalled only by the ultimate question of military success. Some of those same constitutional questions are still live ones in Lincoln literature. Others have been satisfactorily answered. Very few historians hold, for example, that Lincoln had any potential as a dictator, despite the Democrats' wartime assertions to the contrary. No dictator worth his salt would have missed the opportunity the war afforded to postpone the election of 1864. Other questions are very much alive. Whether Lincoln was willing to strain the Constitution only to save the Union but not for the sake of slaves is still a much-debated topic, as are other constitutional questions. Therefore, changing views of the role of the Constitution during the Civil War are of prime concern to all Lincoln students.

Recently, a group of scholars has begun to challenge the way of interpreting constitutional questions that most historians have used over the last forty years. Students of Lincoln are most familiar with the older approach as the one used by J. G. Randall, one of the greatest Lincoln scholars of all time. In discussing "The Rule of Law under Lincoln," Professor Randall urged: "Throughout our history it is necessary to look through the legal arguments of our leaders to the broad social purposes they have sought to attain. Constitutional history, in its ultimate significance thus becomes social history." Randall could use this insight of what was then called "The New History" in its most reductionist sense, as, for example, when he said of Lincoln's era that "Much of the constitutional reasoning of that time was what James Harvey Robinson has called mere 'rationalizing' — 'finding arguments for going on believing as we already do.'" The natural result of such assumptions

about constitutional debate was to ask how the war shaped the Constitution, that is, how what men wanted to believe in order to win the war altered what they had previously believed in peacetime.

The new constitutional history neatly reverses the assumptions of the old school. This is the way Harold Hyman, one of the major prophets of the new constitutional history, describes the new outlook:

... inquirers have attended almost exclusively to only half the impact question, considering primarily the effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the Constitution. The other, largely ignored dimension of this question, perhaps more significant, asks: What were the Constitution's effects on the War and Reconstruction, on the nature of responses to felt wants by nation, state, and local governments, by individuals, by private associations, and by official institutions? If, as I now believe, ascertainable policy alternatives of the 1860's and 1870's were sharply limited as to number, kind, and duration by influential individuals' constitutional perceptions, then insight into those perceptions is in order. For the quarrels of a century ago not only shaped the Constitution, the Constitution shaped the quarrels.

Professor Hyman's student, Phillip S. Paludan, learned his lessons well, and in his recent book, *A Covenant with Death: The Constitution, Law, and Equality in the Civil War Era*, he apologizes that "There is no profound originality in my conclusion that constitutional ideas and preconceptions limited and perhaps destroyed the possibilities for permanent equal justice which the Civil War and Reconstruction spawned." He completely rejects the assumptions of Randall's era:

... I have had to consider the possibility



From the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Francis Lieber (1800-1872) was the author of the first systematic works on political institutions published in America. During the Civil War he acted as a consultant for the War Department. He wrote *Guerilla Parties Considered with Reference to the Laws and Usages of War* (1862) and *A Code for the Government of Armies* (1863), which became the official manual of military law for the Civil War armies as *General Orders No. 100*.

that constitutional arguments are simply excuses or rationalizations for not acting to protect the Negro. I have rejected such an idea because it rings too much of the twentieth century, rather than the nineteenth. The rationalization of one era may well be the reality of another. . . . When it is asserted that someone is making excuses or rationalizing, what may be meant is that he is not giving the reason we would give for our behavior. This is hardly the best foundation for beginning historical study.

Starting from Hyman's premises, Paludan is less optimistic about what Hyman calls the adequacy of the Constitution, and he justifies his study on this ground: "The influence of racial attitudes and political necessities on the failure of Reconstruction is a subject of much current study, but the ability of legal and constitutional beliefs to cripple the era's civil rights advances has not been widely investigated."

The new constitutional history is obviously on to something, as the expression goes. It refuses to ignore a great volume of Civil War literature — pamphlets, speeches, platforms — that by other assumptions constitute merely a veil to be pierced in search of true feelings and desires. The new constitutional historians are certainly right to explore the ways in which genuine constitutional scruples shaped the policy alternatives available in the 1860s and 1870s. They have been particularly effective in showing that these scruples kept concerned policy makers from extending the role of the federal government in helping the freedmen during Reconstruction. States rights were not a casualty of the war. However, the new constitutional history is not altogether satisfactory and presents at least three problems that need to be dealt with. First, although it certainly provides a useful insight into the period, the new constitutional history as written thus far has been poorly served by some of its examples. That is to say, some of the particular constitutional thinkers that have been studied in depth seem to prove quite the opposite point from the one the new constitutional history seeks to prove. Second, the new school of thought has been able to state its insight so succinctly that it has the air of definitiveness about it. As a result, there is some feeling that the new constitutional history has exhausted the subject. In fact, its principal service has been to reopen the subject. Third, much of the new school of thought has been aimed at understanding the period of Reconstruction. Much of the new literature does deal with the Civil War but only insofar as it points towards the problems of Reconstruction. This seems to slight some aspects of Civil War constitutional debate. The problem can be explored in more detail by looking at the examples provided by the work of Hyman and Paludan.

The first problem is best exemplified in the work of Phillip Paludan, who explains his historical method this way:

The inquiry poses a problem in method; two options suggest themselves. The first is to read all the available speeches, pamphlets, and books on constitutional and legal topics and to synthesize from them a composite legal mind of the Civil War era. . . . But this method has its pitfalls. It frequently reveals as much about the mind of the historian as about the mind of the era. The process of selection and synthesis offers too many opportunities for culling from a body of thought only those comments that conform to the historian's generalization.

In addition I think this method is insufficiently historical. While it may tell what happened, it does not tell it the way it happened. Certainly the thought of an era exists, but it does not come into being as "the thought of an era." It is created in the minds of individual men who think of themselves, not as having "the mind of their era," but as unique human beings reaching conclusions based on personal experience and dictated by previous conclusions.

These difficulties are most easily avoided by the more modest method used here: to take what appear to be representative thinkers of an era and analyze their thought in relation to their time. The result, of course, is a narrower focus. Conclusions about the nature of thought during the period must be drawn more tentatively. But the method's merit is that it respects the reality of an enormously complex past. It recognizes that the thought of an age is a composite, not a homogenization of the thoughts of individuals. This is a superior method, but to present any kind of convincing proof at all it must find unambiguous examples — unless the point to be proved is the ambiguity of the age.

Ambiguity is not the point of the new constitutional history; it does seek to prove that constitutional views shaped critical events. Unfortunately, Paludan is not always well served by the examples he chooses. In a book which examines five particular thinkers by way of proving that the Constitution shaped the war and Reconstruction, it seems strange that one of the thinkers would be Francis Lieber. Though certainly an influential thinker during the Civil War (he had Charles Sumner's ear, for example), Lieber always thought historically stable institutions much more important than constitutions. Paludan admits the embarrassing fact that "Unlike any of the other subjects of this study, Lieber reacted to the legal questions of the Civil War by rejecting the Constitution as a guide: 'The whole rebellion is beyond the Constitution. The Constitution was not made for such a state of things.'"

Joel Parker, the Harvard Law School professor, presents an equally unsatisfactory case. To be sure, he was constitutionally much more conservative than Francis Lieber, and he argued vehemently for constitutional restraints on the war powers of the President. But, as Paludan points out, after an initial period of support, "Lincoln lost Parker's support after the fall of 1862." Such an observation does not advance our understanding of the importance of constitutional issues in Lincoln's administration. It only repeats one fundamental problem: if the Emancipation Proclamation (announced in the fall of 1862) was going too far but the Presidential suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* was not, was constitutionalism or hatred of the black man the most important factor?

In the eccentric Philadelphian, Sidney George Fisher, Paludan has an even less fortunate example. Far and away the most innovative constitutional thinker of the Civil War, Fisher had a freewheeling intellect untrammelled by any of the traditional restraints of constitutional logic or tradition. The Civil War led him to advocate congressional abolition of slavery and changing the United States government to a parliamentary system on the British model. Nothing in the United States Constitution shaped these views; the British parliamentary system is what it is precisely because there is no written constitution to limit the legislature's will!

The other two figures in the book wrote principally on Reconstruction; indeed, one of them, Thomas M. Cooley, was only nineteen years old when the Civil War ended.

One could say that Professor Paludan chose the men he studies bravely, for the book devotes four of its eleven chapters to men, Lieber and Fisher, who thought the Constitution either irrelevant to the war effort or totally inadequate to the crisis — indeed, to men who were willing to do away with the Constitution either temporarily or forever. The Constitution did not shape Lieber's and Fisher's war. Joel Parker's constitutionalism carried him only part of the way in support of President Lincoln; he balked at the Emancipation Proclamation. That it was the race question which halted Parker's inclination towards broad construction of the President's constitutional war powers could as easily prove that the war shaped his constitutional views as *vice versa*.

The second major problem with the new constitutional history can best be seen in Harold Hyman's *A More Perfect Union: The Impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the Constitution*. A large book in a prestigious series by an acknowledged authority in the particular field of Civil War constitutional history, this book may serve to frighten other students and scholars away from the subject. It should not.

A check of the footnotes does reveal that Professor Hyman did his homework. Excluding the common pamphlets by constitutional giants like Francis Lieber, the footnotes contain citations to at least forty-seven original articles and pamphlets on constitutional questions of the war itself, not counting sources for Reconstruction after the war or other constitutional issues during the period. As impressive as these citations are, they hardly exhaust the field. For example, Jay Monaghan's famous *Lincoln Bibliography, 1839-1939* lists at least fourteen pamphlets on constitutional questions which are not cited in *A More Perfect Union*. By looking at two examples of the rich constitutional literature of President Lincoln's day, one can get a feel for the work that remains to be done despite the splendid spadework of Professor Hyman and his students.

An interesting example of what can still be examined is Charles P. Kirkland's *A Letter to the Hon Benjamin R. Curtis, Late Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, in Re-*

view of His Recently Published Pamphlet on the "Emancipation Proclamation" of the President (New York: Latimer Bros. & Seymour, Law Stationers, 1862), listed in Monaghan's *Bibliography* as item number 136. Judge Curtis of Massachusetts, though he had dissented from the Dred Scott decision, attacked the Emancipation Proclamation as an abuse of Presidential power. Kirkland, a New York lawyer, replied that the Proclamation would have been an abuse of executive power, which "manifestly and from the whole context of the Constitution, has reference to the civil power of the President . . . in time of peace." But the Proclamation stemmed from other powers "which pertain to him in time of war as 'Commander-in-Chief.'" These powers, he added, "are provided for by the letter and by the spirit of other provisions of the Constitution, by the very nature and necessity of the case, by the first law of nature and of nations, the law of self-preservation."

Kirkland was able to muster two telling points. First, as a good lawyer, he found a previous Supreme Court decision which was embarrassing to Curtis:

The same argument which you make against presidential power was made in *Cross v. Harrison*, 16 Howard, 164, in the Supreme Court of the United States, in a case occurring during, and arising out of, our war with Mexico, in the judgment in which case you, as one of the Justices of that Court, concurred. In that case the President, without any specific provision in the Constitution — without any law of Congress pre-existing or adopted for the occasion, created a civil government in California, established a war tariff, and (by his agents) collected duties. The Court held that . . . "those acts of the President were the exercise of a belligerent right; that they were according to the law of arms and right on the general principles of war and peace." Who will allege, that the acts of the President on that occasion were not, to say the least, as unauthorized by the Constitution and the law as his proclamation in the present case?

Curtis had not denied in his attack on Lincoln that there was a state of war; he had only denied that the powers of the Commander-in-Chief extended to such things as emancipation. Kirkland did find an apparent inconsistency.

Kirkland also found a precedent of sorts. It was not a decided case but the opinion of a former President, John Quincy Adams. In the House of Representatives in 1842, Adams had declared, "that the military authority [in a state of actual war] takes for the time the place of all municipal institutions, slavery among the rest, and that under that state of things, so far from its being true that the States, where slavery exists, have the exclusive management of the subject, not only the President of the United States, but the (subordinate) commander of the army has the power to order the emancipation of the slaves."

Kirkland's pamphlet, with its reference to John Quincy Adams, is significant for two reasons. First, President Lincoln himself read and liked Kirkland's pamphlet. On December 7, 1862, the President wrote Kirkland: "I have just received, and hastily read your published letter to the Hon. Benjamin R. Curtis. Under the circumstances I may not be the most competent judge, but it appears to me to be a paper of great ability, and for the country's sake, more than my own, I thank you for it." Second, David Donald, in his famous essay "Abraham Lincoln: Whig in the White House," argues that Adams's view of emancipation as a war power was an important aspect of Lincoln's Whig background, but he does not cite Kirkland's pamphlet. The closest link Donald can find between Lincoln's views and Adams's argument is Lincoln's endorsement of William Whiting's *War Powers of the President*, which "leaned heavily upon Adams's argument." In Lincoln's endorsement of Kirkland's pamphlet, there is further proof that the Adams connection was an important one for the Emancipator.

Another fascinating example of unexplored constitutional literature is W.W. Handlin's *American Politics, A Moral and Political Work, Treating of the Causes of the Civil War, the Nature of Government, and the Necessity for Reform* (New Orleans: Isaac T. Hinton, 1864). This eccentric work, referred to in Hyman's book in a vague note about "utopian and antiutopian literature," makes Sidney George Fisher's admiration of parliamentary government seem mild by comparison. Handlin despised universal suffrage and the political system built on it. He claimed that the Civil War itself was

caused by political demagogues, originally men with no employment who gained a living by keeping the political cauldron boiling. He wanted to see electioneering "discountenanced," elective terms longer, judges appointed and not elected, and politics in general returned to the hands of the old and respectable rather than the young and idle men. Demagogues so flattered the people that the people came to think of themselves as potentates; they came to distrust government because of the pernicious idea that governors are servants. "It is natural for men to follow leaders," Handlin asserted, and leaders should have authority and respect.

Handlin was Whiggish in his views. He claimed, curiously, that there would have been no war if there had been a national bank. He supported a protective tariff, he supported colonization and the amelioration of the lot of the slave, and he opposed territorial expansion. He was, although Whigs certainly had no special claim to it, a staunch unionist as well. He valued the Union much more highly than the Constitution:

But what is the Constitution? It is the fundamental law of the nation. It is not the nation. The nation may exist without it, as many nations do exist without formal or written constitutions. A part of the Constitution is the oath of the President, by which he undertakes to preserve, perpetuate and defend the nation. Everything which is necessary to that end should be done by him. If a case should arise where it would be necessary to go counter to the Constitution to save the nation, he should not hesitate to do it, because it would be his sworn duty; and it would be stupid to say that the government should be lost merely on account of some defective clause in the organic law.

Handlin was less interested in defending the administration's constitutionally questionable acts than he was in solving the problem which had brought on the war in the first place, demagogic politics. Arguing that the excitement caused by Presidential elections "will always cause war," Handlin urged that the President should be chosen by rotation. He recommended that the oldest Senator should become President for life. There was "nothing here . . . favoring . . . monarchy or empire," he said, and the age of the President would be no problem. Many Senators were "vigorous in intellect up to the moment of death." The men he had in mind were "Webster, Crittenden, Clay . . . and in the last years of their lives they would have filled the office of President with power and credit." The examples were Whigs to a man, of course, and it should be noted that he failed to mention another of the great old Senators of that by-gone era, John C. Calhoun.

The existence of one more isolated thinker like Handlin whose thought on the Civil War overflowed any constitutional channels, does not challenge the essential insight of the new constitutional history in any major way. However, it does suggest that a too-willing acceptance of their insights will diminish any appreciation for the varieties of responses the Civil War evoked.

War and revolution are surely the events which are most capable of provoking innovative political ideas. In focusing on both the Civil War and Reconstruction — and the new constitutional historians tend to look at the two as one critical period in American history — some historians may be slighting the degree to which war shaped the Constitution. *Inter arma silent leges* is hoary doctrine, though it is not American doctrine, and it seems plausible that constitutional restraint may have been relatively greater in peace (Reconstruction) than in war. By not focusing on constitutional issues during the war exclusively, the new constitutional historians may tend to exaggerate the ability of constitutional ideas to restrain social action. The constitutional issues of the war years alone are surely complex enough for a book on the subject which does not look beyond 1865.

These observations, if they mean anything, are meaningful principally for the future study of this subject. The new work that has been done is good. The thinkers in Paludan's study are thoroughly treated. Hyman's work provides an interesting framework, grounded in a wide reading of the sources, for future investigations. Students of Lincoln's Presidency are indeed lucky to have such refreshing insights brought to their subject, but there is still room for much more work. Scholars should begin to explore the numerous pamphlets on constitutional issues; the new constitutional history has proved that this literature is more than "mere" rhetoric.

CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY 1976-1977

Selections approved by a Bibliography Committee consisting of the following members: Dr. Kenneth A. Bernard, Belmont Arms, 51 Belmont St., Apt. C-2, South Easton, Mass.; Arnold Gates, 289 New Hyde Park Rd., Garden City, N.Y.; Carl Haverlin, 8619 Louise Avenue, Northridge, California; James T. Hickey, Illinois State Historical Library, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois; E.B. (Pete) Long, 607 S. 15th St., Laramie, Wyoming; Ralph G. Newman, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, Illinois; Hon. Fred Schwengel, 200 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C.; Dr. Wayne C. Temple, 1121 S 4th Street Court, Springfield, Illinois. New items available for consideration may be sent to the above persons, or the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum.

1976

BERNS, LAURENCE, EVA BRANN, GLEN E.**THUROW, GEORGE ANASTAPLO**

1976-21

Abraham Lincoln/The Gettysburg Address/and/American Constitutionalism/Laurence Berns Eva Brann/Glen E. Thurow George Anastaplo/edited by Leo Paul S. de Alvarez/University of Dallas Press/[Copyright 1976 by the University of Dallas Press, Irving, Texas. All rights reserved.] Book, paper, 8 7/8" x 5 7/8", 203 (5) pp., price, \$7.95.

COLVER, ANNE

1976-22

Bad Jack/and the Lincoln Boys/Author/Anne Colver/Illustrated by/George Ulrich/Raintree Editions/[Copyright 1976 by Anne Colver. All rights reserved.] Brochure, cloth, 8 3/4" x 6 3/4", 47 (1) pp., illus., price, \$6.60.

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1976-23

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Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10 1/8" x 7 1/8", 137-180 pp., illus., price per single issue, \$2.50.

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1976-24

President Lincoln/Opera in 4 Acts and 9 Scenes/Book and Music by Sam Raphling/Characters in Order of Appearance/(Caption title)/[Opera in piano reduction. Copyright 1976 by General Music Publishing Co., Inc., Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. International copyright secured. All rights reserved. Published by General Music Publishing Company, Inc.]

Book, flexible boards, 11 1/8" x 8 1/2", 160 pp., illus., price, \$15.00.

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Abraham Lincoln/And/American Political Religion/Glen E. Thurow/State University of New York Press/Albany, New York, 1976/[First edition. Copyright 1976 by State University of New York. All rights reserved.]

Book, cloth, 8 3/8" x 5 5/8", xiii p., 133 (6) pp.

WINSTEAD, GUY

1976-26

Lincoln Heritage House/Freeman Lake Park, Elizabethtown, Ky./Built 1789-1805/(Sketch of Lincoln Heritage House)/Open June 1st to October 1st/Tuesday through Sunday/10 A.M. to 5 P.M./The Lincoln Heritage House is entered in the/National Register of Historic Places. A historical/marker has been erected by the State of/Ken-/tucky at the site./[Cover title]/

Folder, paper, 8 1/2" x 3 3/4", single sheet folded once, illus. Sketches by Dr. R.T. Clagett. Lincoln Heritage House photographs by Susan Grubbs. Text by Guy Winstead. Paid for with funds from Hardin County Bicentennial Committee 1976.

LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE FOUNDATION 1976-27

Lincoln Lore/Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation ... Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month/by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801./Number 1661, July 1976 to Number 1666, December 1976.

Folder, paper, 11" x 8 1/2", 4 pp., illus. Number 1661, Hugh McCulloch And The Bears Of Wall Street, July 1976, Number 1662, Lincoln Historiography: News And Notes, August 1976; Number 1663, The Federalist, the Constitution, and the Civil War, September 1976, Number 1664, The Troublesome Border States: Two Previously Unpublished Lincoln Documents, October 1976; Number 1665, "... one of the little breech-loading cannons I got of Hon. Eli Thayer," November 1976; Number 1666, Index for 1976, December 1976.

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Illinois/History/Volume 30/Number 5/February 1977/Abraham Lincoln/Lessons Learned as a/Legislator — Visits to/Bloomington — Wilson/of the Long Nine — The/Spot Resolutions — The/Debate at Jonesboro — A/Denunciation of Slavery/(Portrait of Abraham Lincoln painted on ivory by John Henry Brown in 1860. Lincoln is facing right.)/Abraham Lincoln/(Cover title)/[Copyright 1977 by the Illinois State Historical Society. Published by the Illinois State Historical Library in cooperation with the Illinois State Historical Society, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62706.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7 1/4", 99-119 pp., illus., price, 25¢.

ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1977-2

Journal/of the Illinois State Historical Society/Volume LXX/Number 1/February 1977/Contents/2 Jefferson Davis and the American Revolutionary Tradition/Emory M. Thomas/10 Lincoln, the Rule of Law, and the American Revolution/Phillip S. Paludan/Lincolniana/18 The 1856 Election: An Unpublished Lincoln Letter/Edited by William E. Gienapp/22 A Family Divided/Edited by James T. Hickey/27 "A Monotony Full of Sadness": The Diary of Nadine Turchin, May, 1863 — April, 1864/Edited by Mary Ellen McElligott/90 Book Reviews/96 Picture Credits/Cover: "As I Would Not Be A Slave"

.../.../.../Copyright, Illinois State Historical Society, 1977 (3150-2-77) (Device) 14/

Book, paper, 9 1/2" x 7 1/2", 96 pp., illus., price, \$3.50.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL**UNIVERSITY 1977-3**

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to historical/research in the field of Lincolniana and/the Civil War, and to the promotion/of Lincoln Ideals in American/Education./[Harrogate, Tenn.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10 1/8" x 7 1/8", 1-44 pp., illus., price per single issue, \$2.50.

MOCHIZUKI, MASA HARU

1977-4

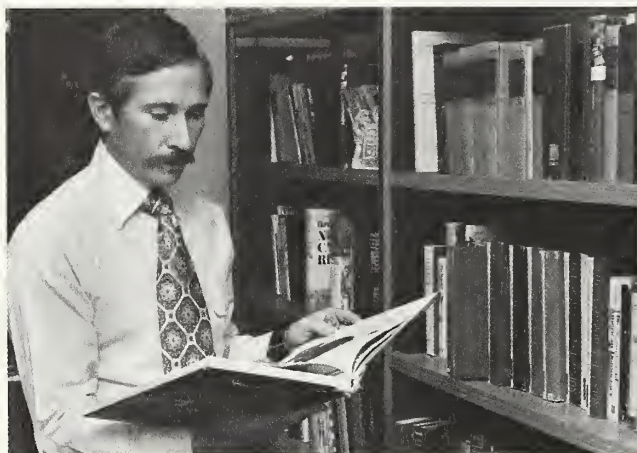
(Device)/(Portrait of Lincoln facing right)/(1809-1865)/16th President of U.S.A./[Japanese printing]/Lincoln Report/No. 19/Feb. 12, 1977/No. 19/[Japanese printing]/[Japanese printing]/Tokyo Lincoln Center/Masaharu Mochizuki, Director/2-1, Sarugaku-cho 1-chome, Chiyoda ku, Tokyo, Japan/Phone 291-1860/Mail address: P.O. Box 5001, Tokyo International, Tokyo, Japan/(Cover title)/[Printed in Tokyo, Japan in both Japanese and English languages.] Pamphlet, paper, 10 1/8" x 7 1/8", 7(3) pp. Contains a listing of the collection of the Tokyo Lincoln Center, recent acquisitions, books on Abraham Lincoln published in Japan, pamphlets, clippings & etc in Japanese language and facts about U.S.A.

OATES, STEPHEN B.

1977-5

With Malice/Toward None/The Life Of/Abraham Lincoln/(Device)/Stephen B. Oates/Harper & Row, Publishers/New York. Hagerstown. San Francisco. London/[Copyright 1977 by Stephen B. Oates. All rights reserved.]

Book, cloth, 9 1/2" x 6 1/2", xvii p., 492 (3) pp., illus., price, \$15.95



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Stephen B. Oates



Lincoln Lore

January, 1978

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Number 1679

THURLOW WEED, THE NEW YORK CUSTOM HOUSE, AND MRS. LINCOLN'S "TREASON"

In January, 1975, *Lincoln Lore* published an article proving that Abraham Lincoln did not appear before the Committee on the Conduct of the War to defend his wife from allegations of treason. The source of the erroneous story about Lincoln's appearance was Thomas L. James, a New Yorker who served as Postmaster General in President Garfield's cabinet. It was easy to prove that James could not have heard the story, as he claimed, from a Senator who had been a member of that committee, because all but two of the Senators were dead by the time James claimed to hear the story (1881). Of the remaining two, one was of the opposition party (and would never have sat upon a story that could kill the Republican party), and the other retired to Oregon after one term in the Senate (and had no opportunity to see James).

The story obviously was not true, but where did it come from? Why did this relatively obscure New York politician, whose name otherwise never appeared in the Lincoln story, become the source for this famous Lincoln anecdote? In 1975, there seemed to be no answer to this question. Now it is possible to establish a plausible connection between James and the allegations against Mrs. Lincoln, but to do so will require a historical excursion to the docks of New York City, an examination of a rare pamphlet which Jay Monaghan failed to list in his *Lincoln Bibliography*, and a brief discussion of the seamier side of American politics.

Hardly a patronage prize in nineteenth-century American politics was sought after more ardently than the collectorship of the New York Custom House. As far back as 1841, a correspondent had warned Presidential-hopeful Henry Clay that the position in the New York Custom House was "second only in influence to that of Postmaster-General." By the time of the Civil War, the collector's salary was \$6,340, and he could expect to earn another \$20,000 from fees. The Custom House perhaps employed 1,200 people, all of whom gave two percent of their salaries to the coffers of the party that got them their jobs in the first

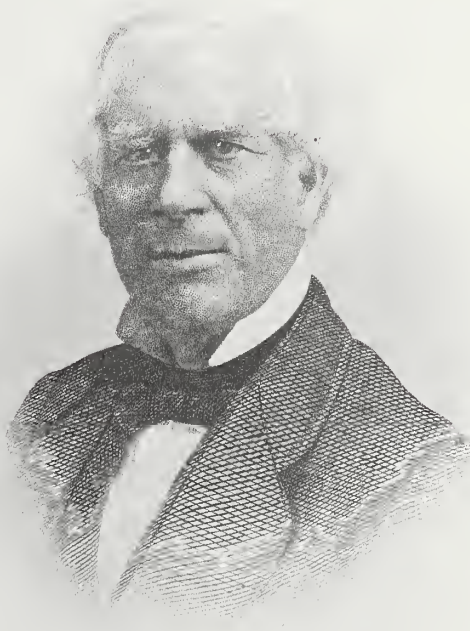
place. It is little wonder that this prize whetted political appetites all over the country.

The New York Custom House was often the focus of unseemly intra-party feuds in the Empire State. The period of Lincoln's Presidency was no exception, and a dispute over the Custom House marred New York politics throughout the Civil War. It became the focus of a long-standing feud between the wing of the Republican party controlled by William H. Seward and his henchman Thurlow Weed, on the one hand, and the wing controlled by Horace Greeley and William Cullen Bryant, on the other. There were many smaller feuds and many irregular twists and turns, but the existence of animosity between Seward and Greeley, two men of enormous talents and ambitions, kept the fires of conflict raging in New York Republican politics.

Since Seward was in Washington as Secretary of State for the entire period of Lincoln's Presidency, the local feud in New York centered above all on the personality and politics of Thurlow Weed. When the Lincoln administration first took office, Weed gave the impression that he would be the conduit through which all administration patronage in New York would flow. President Lincoln informed Weed, however, that his motto in such matters was "justice to all" and that Weed did not have Lincoln's "authority to arrange" all such matters in New York.

Endeavoring "to apply the rule of give and take," President Lincoln first appointed Hiram Barney to the collectorship. He was an enemy of Weed's faction, and he appointed, among others, Rufus F. Andrews to the position of Surveyor of the Port of New York, one of the many offices the collector could appoint. Despite their appointments, however, the bulk of the Custom House offices went to partisans of Weed and Seward.

In 1862, Barney used Custom House patronage to help nominate James S. Wadsworth for Governor of New York. Wadsworth was an anti-Weed Republican, and he would run against Democrat Horatio



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FIGURE 1. Thurlow Weed.

Seymour. Seymour won, and Wadsworth's supporters claimed that Weed had stabbed the Republican candidate in the back. Weed's explanation was different. True, he said, he had supported a renomination of Governor Edwin D. Morgan to run on a platform strictly of support for reuniting the Union. It was also true that Weed had been disappointed by not having the ticket "ballasted" by a candidate for Lieutenant-Governor friendly to Weed, that "Weed men" were carefully excluded from the state committee, that the party headquarters were moved from Albany (Weed's upstate bailiwick) to New York City, and that Wadsworth took an "abolition" line in his speeches despite Weed's pleading with him to take a strictly "Union" line. Nevertheless, when Wadsworth's managers came to Weed out of desperation because they could not raise money for the canvass, he let bygones be bygones and called out his party workers. They went to work too late, but in Weed's estimation he had been faithful to the party when it needed him.

Despite occasional setbacks like the disastrous Wadsworth nomination, Thurlow Weed managed to dominate, if not control completely, the Custom House. This was increasingly true as his enemies in the party and in the Custom House became identified with Salmon P. Chase's bid for the Republican nomination for President in 1864. At a meeting of the state committee from which Chase supporters were absent, Weed managed to get an endorsement for Lincoln's renomination.

In September, Chase's supporters (and many of Weed's enemies) were removed from the Custom House. Collector Barney and Surveyor Rufus Andrews were among those removed. Andrews, who had been a delegate to the convention in Baltimore which nominated Lincoln, took an active part in the campaign for his election anyway. About a month after the election, Andrews published an angry letter in the New York *Tribune* savagely attacking Weed. The Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum has recently acquired a rare copy of the letter as a separately published pamphlet entitled, *Letter of Rufus F. Andrews, Lately Surveyor of the Port of New York, to Thurlow Weed, Lately Editor of the Albany Evening Journal* (New York: 1864). This choice example of nineteenth-century political vituperation discussed the Custom House removals of September. It was published on the eve of Thurlow Weed's trial in a \$50,000 damage suit brought against him by George Opdyke, Mayor of New York City and an adherent of the Greeley faction. The libel suit was an outgrowth of the factional wars in New York and, especially, of Weed's attacks on his rivals. Weed had accused Greeley of involvement, through a friend, in shady speculations in Southern cotton. Weed had charged Isaac Henderson, who was a proprietor of William Cullen Bryant's newspaper and a Lincoln appointee as Navy Agent for New York, of graft and illicit commissions on government contracts. He accused Opdyke of sitting on a committee which awarded a \$190,000 indemnity for a gun factory destroyed in the 1863 draft riots — a gun factory in which Opdyke had a personal financial interest. He said, too, that Opdyke had secret partnerships which led to profits from government contracts for cloth, blankets, clothing, and guns. Opdyke was further alleged to have been involved in the Mariposa Mining Company, which swindled General John C. Frémont. Opdyke pressed a suit for libel, and Andrews's letter appeared at a strategic moment — the day before the trial began.

Andrews claimed that he waited until after the Presidential election to write for fear that "to avenge personal wrongs might damage the cause of Republican government and free institutions" at such a critical time. He said that he met Weed first in the winter of 1857-1858. A young lawyer from New York City, Andrews was flattered by Weed's attention and became one of his partisans ("you and I were thrown a great deal together in politics"). In 1860, Andrews worked for Lincoln's election, and in 1861 he got the reward of the politician who chooses the right Presidential horse; he was appointed Surveyor of the Port of New York. At that point, Andrews said, "I yielded to your entreaties, and gave to you for your friends a large proportion of the best places in my gift."

Then a remarkable thing happened. In 1863, according to Andrews, Weed became "severe in . . . denunciations of the President," proclaimed him an "old Imbecile," judged the war a "failure," and called Lincoln's "advising ministers a corrupt and inefficient cabal." Finally, Andrews continued,

. . . in the spring of 1863, in a public hotel of the city of New

York, you announced to an indiscriminate audience that the wife of the President of the United States was guilty of treasonable conduct, and that by order of the Secretary of War that lady had been banished [from] the Capital; an order which you declared was too long delayed! This occurred in my hearing, and I promptly denied the statement, and branded it as the invention of malicious mendacity.

Mrs. Lincoln arrived in New York that very evening, Andrews said, and he "called to pay her" his "accustomed respects." He also expressed his "surprise at hearing she had been ordered to leave Washington." Astonished and indignant, Mrs. Lincoln demanded the source of the allegation. Andrews told. Weed subsequently "went to Washington, and sued for and received pardon" for his offense, but he never forgave Andrews for his "interposition upon behalf of a slandered woman."

In my zeal to save the first American lady from aspersion [Andrews wrote], I incurred the wrath of her defamer, and from that hour how to destroy me became his chief ambition. Thenceforward your hatred to me had no boundary but your capacity for harm.

Andrews claimed that Weed tried unsuccessfully to keep him from becoming a delegate to the Republican nominating convention in 1864. Andrews quoted Weed's letter in the Albany *Evening Journal* of June 11, 1864, which charged that "a formidable and organized body of ultra abolitionists, 'loyal leaguers,' and radical demagogues appeared at Baltimore, for the purpose, . . . of procuring the nomination of Mr. Dickinson for Vice-President, that Mr. Seward might be excluded from the Cabinet. In this miserable intrigue the ultraists of Massachusetts cuddled with the slime of New York." In particular, Weed noted that "Mr. Lincoln's Surveyor of the port of New York, was among the most unscrupulous traducers of Mr. Lincoln's Secretary of State." To put a New Yorker in the Vice-Presidency would be to remove Seward from the Cabinet, for it was assumed that Lincoln would not have two New Yorkers among his closest advisors. Andrews denied the charge and called Seward "a statesman of whom the nation may be justly proud." Andrews also noted Weed's letter of June 25, 1864, which attacked George Opdyke, who had brought suit against him: Weed asked him to explain "the alleged sale of the office of Surveyor of the port of New York for the moderate sum of \$10,000." Again, Andrews denied the charge and said, "I have been subpoenaed as a witness in the case of Opdyke vs. Weed, and am happy in the belief that you are to be gratified on this point of the 'alleged sale,' whenever the trial of that cause shall take place."

Andrews explained his own downfall as Weed's effort to save his power. Having beaten Weed's forces and served as a delegate in the nominating convention, Andrews was a symbol of Weed's inability to control New York's party. He had to be removed. Andrews charged that Weed had friends tell Lincoln that he would not support him for President in 1864 if Andrews was retained. "I was dismissed, and you triumphed," Andrews concluded, but, "not imputing blame to the President, I devoted my time, money, and efforts to securing his re-election to the office which he adorns."

Such was Andrews's remarkable story, but one thing has been left out, the extreme language he used to tell it. He called Weed a "demagogue," a "hypocrite," and an "ingrate." He recalled Weed's well-known nicknames in opposition circles, "the Old Man," "the Lucifer of the Lobby," and "Fagin the Jew." He referred to Weed's retirement from the editorship of the Albany *Evening Journal* in 1863 and claimed that Weed dodged military service because of a "sprained wrist." "Why don't you emulate the last virtue of Judas Iscariot," Andrews asked, "and hang yourself?" In addition to name-calling, Andrews made a point of Weed's disloyalty to the Lincoln administration. He dated Weed's impatience with the President from the fall of 1862:

According to your expressed views, nothing was right. In civil and military life everything was wrong. The policy of the Government was condemned by you in unmeasured terms. The principles of liberty were sneeringly alluded to by you as weak devices of fanatics and abolitionists. The appointments to office were "not fit to be made."

Certainly, not all that Andrews said was true. For example, Weed's resignation letter claimed "an infirm leg and a broken arm" as reasons for not going to military service; besides, "the

Old Man" was sixty-five years old. On the other hand, Andrews's letter is not without its uses. Harry J. Carman and Reinhard Luthin in *Lincoln and the Patronage* term Weed "a loyal supporter of the administration," and so he was when the chips were down. Yet, he did have his differences with the administration, and Andrews's letter serves to alert us to the nature and degree of those differences.

Weed had his principal differences with what his grandson and memorialist Thurlow Weed Barnes called "the radical section of the Republican party." In his letter announcing his retirement from his newspaper, Weed said:

I differ widely with my party about the best means of crushing the Rebellion. That difference is radical and irreconcilable. I can neither impress others with my views, nor surrender my own solemn convictions. The alternative of living in strife with those whom I have esteemed, or withdrawing, is presented. I have not hesitated in choosing the path of peace as the path of duty.

These differences clearly centered around the Emancipation Proclamation. Though Weed apparently issued an endorsement of the Proclamation as a document which even "the most ungenerous enemies of our cause will be compelled to respect," he must not have cared for it very much. In late 1862 and early 1863, Weed was in the forefront of attempts to unite on a Democrat like Horatio Seymour or General McClellan to lead a Union party on a platform of simply reuniting the Union. After the draft riots, he wrote Henry Raymond, editor of the *New York Times*, offering a 500 dollar con-

tribution "for the relief of the colored people whose dwellings were robbed and who were driven from their employment." In the course of doing so, Weed wrote:

For this persecution of the negro there is divided responsibility. The hostility of Irishmen to Africans is unworthy of men who themselves seek and find in America an asylum from oppression. Yet this hostility would not culminate in arson and murder but for the stimulants applied by fanatics. Journalists who persistently inflame and exasperate the ignorant and the lawless against the negro are morally responsible for these outrages. When all the circumstances have been reviewed, the popular condemnation of those who, while the United States was struggling for its existence, thrust the unoffending negro forward as a target for infuriated mobs, will become general and emphatic.

In South Carolina ultra Abolitionists have been hailed as the "best friends" of secession. Practically, they are the worst enemies of the colored man. Had it not been for the malign influence of these howling fanatics in Congress and with the President, rebellion would not, in the beginning, have assumed such formidable proportions; nor, in its progress, would the North have been divided or the government crippled . . .

The abolitionists had too much influence on Lincoln to suit Thurlow Weed. In the summer and autumn of 1863, he devised a plan to end the war which he submitted to President Lincoln, and there was no abolition in it. It called for the President "to issue a proclamation offering pardon and amnesty to all persons engaged in making war upon the government" as soon as there was a military success. A ninety-day armistice should follow, during which any states which returned to their former allegiance would be fully restored to the privileges they enjoyed before the war. After the armistice, any states refusing pardon would be affected by another proclamation "announcing that in the future prosecution of the war . . . , all territory, whether farms, villages, or cities, shall be PARTITIONED equitably between and among the officers and soldiers by whom it shall be conquered." This was an interesting proposition, for what do we make of Weed's self-conscious opposition to radicalism when his own plan embodied the most radical plan ever proposed by Republican politicians, the partitioning of Southern plantations? The only difference was not in degree of radicalism but in the particular social group to be served. Weed's helped white Northerners and the "radical" proposal helped black Southerners. Each was socially revolutionary, and Weed defended his policy as a social and political revolution:

Your armies [Weed told Lincoln] will be voluntarily and promptly recruited, and their ranks filled with enterprising, earnest yeomen, who have an intelligent reason for entering the army, and who know that the realization of their hopes depends upon their zeal, fidelity, and courage. And by thus providing homes and occupations when the war is over for our disbanded soldiers, you leave scattered over rebel territory an element that may be relied upon for the reconstruction of civil government in the seceded states. Each plan was potentially bloody:

In answer to those who may object [Weed wrote the President] to the sanguinary feature of this plan, I think it quite sufficient to say that in maritime wars this feature has long been recognized and practiced by all civilized nations. Argosies of merchant vessels, laden with untold millions of the wealth of non-combatants, captured in time of war, are divided as prize money among the officers and sailors by whom they are captured. This, therefore, in all wars upon the oceans and seas of the world, being a part of the law of nations, cannot, in reason or common-sense, be objected to, whereas, in this case, the sufferers are in rebellion against their government, and have been warned of the consequences of rejecting the most liberal offers of peace, protection, and prosperity.

If we may judge by Weed's conservatism, the only difference between the wings of the Republican party was not their relative degree of constitutional flexibility or even sanguinary desires for social revolution; their difference was over whether to help the black man or not.

This is not to say, of course, that the differences between Weed and Andrews, or in general between the Weed faction



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FIGURE 2. The "Old Man."

and the Greeley faction, involved anything so high-minded and ideological as policy alternatives towards the black race. True, factions do use issues and sometimes use them long enough to become identified over a period of time with one issue or another. But there was a lot more at work in New York's factionalism than philosophical disagreements over policy. Personal ambitions were a major factor; there were only so many offices to be filled, and many talented Republicans vied for them. Here, for example, is Weed's explanation of the opposition to the renomination of Governor Morgan in 1862:

Mr. Greeley still aspired to the Senate, and Governor Morgan, a resident of New York, was in his way. He therefore urged the nomination of General Wadsworth, a western man, of Democratic antecedents, so that the field for the Senate might remain open.

Though jaundiced, of course, this explanation has nothing to do with issues, and it serves to remind us of a factor of overriding importance in New York politics, the upstate-New York City conflict. From the era of the ratification of the United States Constitution to the Civil War to the present day, this rivalry has been great enough to cause threats that the city would secede from the state. In a rough way, one can understand the Seward/Weed-Greeley feud by the simple notion that the former men were from upstate and the latter from New York City.

But in all the welter of confusion over Republican factionalism in New York, we have almost lost track of the accusations about Mrs. Lincoln's treason. The importance of the emergence of that story in this wrangle over patronage is not that it makes the story any more verifiable or understandable, but that it links the story to Thomas L. James. For James got his political education in the New York Custom House. From 1861 to 1864, James served as inspector of customs for the port of New York. Moreover, James was married four times: his first wife was Emily Ida Freeburn, a niece of Thurlow Weed. His second wife was her sister. He was twice married to nieces of Thurlow Weed! We can now understand better how Thomas L. James became the source for the famous

story about Mrs. Lincoln's treason. As a Custom House appointee throughout the war years, James was present to witness the Andrews-Weed feud. Moreover, as Weed's relative by marriage, he had more reason than most to take note of the charge that Weed had accused Mrs. Lincoln of treason. Of course, the story of the President's appearance before the Committee on the Conduct of the War was not included, but the seventeen years that would intervene before James told the story would cloud the memory, alter details, and embellish the story. At last we know that James had some connection to allegations of Mrs. Lincoln's treason.

What of Rufus Andrews? He never got his job back, but it is hard to arouse much pity for him. He was the ultimate spoilsman. Our principal source of knowledge about Andrews is five letters written by him and preserved in the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection in the Library of Congress. They reveal the other side of the pamphleteer who claimed to defend Mrs. Lincoln's honor. One letter is a recommendation for office (July 2, 1862). One is his letter saying he will sacrifice himself "to the insatiable thirst of revenge, and the senile lust of power" for the sake of his party (August 31, 1864). Another, written one day later, places him and a fellow campaigner for Lincoln at Willard's Hotel in Washington, hoping Lincoln will call them to come and explain Andrews's case. The other two letters, though they do not mention any issues or personalities of the Civil War era, are the most revealing of all. Both were written several months before his removal from office. On January 15, 1864, he wrote President Lincoln: "I send you by express this day, a Saddle of English Mutton, received by the Scotia [sic.]. I hope the disposition of the English may hereafter be as good as their mutton." And again on February 27, 1864, he sent "by express . . . some English mutton just received from the other side of the world — I hope it may reach you in time for your dinner tomorrow." Whether it was a tribute to Weed's clout or Lincoln's lack of susceptibility to the little favors extended from the New York Custom House, a little English mutton was not enough to keep Rufus Andrews in office.



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FIGURE 3. Horatio Seymour and George McClellan as Republicans saw them by 1864.



Lincoln Lore

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THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY: A RESPECTABLE MINORITY?

Although much of the drama of the Lincoln Presidency has always stemmed from descriptions of his struggles with opposition on the home front, careful studies of the nature of the opposition itself have been few indeed. Understanding the precise nature of the opposition to Lincoln is critical for understanding Lincoln himself. To realize the importance of this, one need only recall the difference in accounts of Lincoln's Presidency written in times when the Democrats were viewed principally as Copperheads and those written in times when the Democratic opposition was thought to be mostly a loyal opposition. Joel Silbey has now provided a comprehensive look at the Democratic party in the Civil War era. *A Respectable Minority: The Democratic Party in the Civil War Era, 1860-1868* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977) describes the history of the opposition, as it were, from the inside, not from the perspective of the Lincoln administration.

In the turmoil of the 1850s, when the Republican party was born, the Democrats lost enough voters to become a minority party. In 1861, they would also lose their greatest national leader, Stephen Douglas. Though there was no way for the leaders to know it, the party had taken the bulk of the losses it would suffer for several decades to come. The Democratic party was in 1860, on the threshold of the Civil War, a somewhat shrunken, but coherent body. It was now a minority party, but it was "a respectable minority" which could depend upon steadily turning out a substantial body of voters for any election. Such was the way the party looked from the outside.

Internally, the party's history did show some dynamics of change and fluctuation. When war broke out in 1861, the impulse of most Democrats was to rally around the flag. "I am with you in this contest," said Fernando Wood, who would become a highly partisan opponent of Republican war policies later. "I know no party now." Stephen Douglas was ready even before Sumter "to make any reasonable sacrifice of party tenets to save the country." After Sumter, Silbey writes, "he

was quoted as favoring the immediate hanging of Southern sympathizers in the District of Columbia unless they repented their treason; and he pled to his party in his last speech to help rescue the country first and think about partisan differences later." Republicans were flabbergasted and delighted. Lincoln exploited the party honeymoon by appointing Democrat Edwin Stanton Secretary of War, and in various states Republicans promoted Union parties to ignore previous partisan identifications. They succeeded for a time. "In many places," says Silbey, "Democratic local and state conventions, the supreme policy-articulating and electoral-organizing units of the party, stopped meeting throughout 1861

and into early 1862, even on such sacred party days as the eighth of January, the anniversary of Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans."

Gradually, Republican measures which squinted towards emancipation and which restricted civil liberties revived Democratic partisanship. A small body of Democrats, the so-called War Democrats, parted ways with the mass of Democrats at this point — a movement which Silbey is at a loss to explain. In March, 1862, Clement Vallandigham arranged a meeting of Democratic members of Congress which published a partisan "Address . . . To the Democracy of the United States" in May. This call to the party colors rejected absorption of the Democrats and revived the opposition. Candidates chosen in this new spirit did rather well in the fall elections of 1862, aided in good measure by Lincoln's issuance of the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September.

As always, success bred factionalism. By 1863, the Democrats were split between groups which Silbey calls "Legitimists" and "Purists." Following distinctions made by political scientist Austin Ranney in *To Cure the Mischief of Faction: Party Reform in America*, Silbey argues that parties are usually split between a group which takes primarily a "competitive" view of the functions of the party and a



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FIGURE 1. In 1864, Republicans attacked Democratic candidate George B. McClellan in two ways. First, they made him guilty by association with his Vice-Presidential running mate, George Pendleton, who was identified with the peace wing of the party (see FIGURE 3 in *Lincoln Lore* Number 1679). Second, they could undermine his personal embodiment of pro-war sentiment by making him appear a worthless general. In this caricature reproduced as a *carte-de-visite* for parlor albums, the latter strategy dictated McClellan's ridiculous appearance as a general with a paper hat on a wooden horse.

group which takes essentially an "expressive" view. The former head always for the center of the ideological spectrum in order to attract as many voters as possible to the party. The latter feel more compelled to enunciate the party's principles articulately and loudly. The Democratic Legitimists wished to make it always clear that the party was a legitimate opposition, that they did not flirt with treason, and that they were fully as patriotic as the Republicans. The Democratic Purists were nervous about abandoning cherished party traditions and beliefs in a search for "legitimacy" in the eyes of the centrist voter. They did not want to degenerate into a "me-too" war party.

In 1863, the Purists — most students of the Civil War period know them as the Peace men — were in the ascendant. Electoral gains in the previous year, continuing failure to have decisive military success, and continuing restraints on civil liberties along with emancipation and Negro soldiers put those who wished to express opposition in a position to dictate nominations in Connecticut (Thomas Seymour), in Pennsylvania (George Woodward), and in Ohio (Vallandigham). Legitimists like Samuel Sullivan "Sunset" Cox felt gloomy, and their predictions proved to be accurate: the Democrats lost all three of these gubernatorial elections.

Failure of the Purists gave the Legitimists the advantage for the 1864 Presidential nomination. George McClellan was the perfect Legitimist candidate: he was a general and a good Democrat. Purists were not as enthusiastic; they did not care for having a general head the ticket, and especially a general who had suppressed civil liberties in the border states early in the war. The party may have been near a split, but, as election day neared, both sides decided "there was too much at stake to quarrel." The Democrats struggled with the perpetual problem of American political parties: what works to get the nomination is often the opposite of what will work thereafter to win the election. Thus S.S. Cox wrote McClellan about his West Point speech, a strong endorsement of the war, warning him that it "will give you the election, but it does not help . . . the nomination." Cox advised that he should say something about "the necessity of using all rational methods at every honorable chance for peace and union." This was needed, not for his election, but "for his nomination."

It is not clear whether agreement was reached before the Chicago convention to have a war candidate and a peace platform, but many suspected such would be the case — and it was. For the first time since 1844, Silbey points out, the Democratic platform did not invoke the usual litany about economic questions such as the tariff, banks, and land distribution. It stressed the failure of the war and the precarious state of constitutional liberties.

McClellan lost, of course, in what was, in terms of the electoral vote, a landslide. But Silbey is careful to point out that the Democrats remained about as competitive as they had been since 1860. In fact, the stability of Democratic competitiveness in this era is one of the principal themes of the book and surely one of Silbey's original contributions. He compiles an index of competitiveness for each state, an index which is based on how much the runner-up needs to overcome the winner. Silbey finds the Democrats rather competitive in the belt of states from New York to Illinois which decided national elections. So competitive were they that there may have been considerable wisdom in the Republican efforts to admit solidly Republican Western states in the Union and control the returns from Border States by military intimidation. Silbey believes with most political historians that a "party's popular vote was not built from different segments of the population in successive elections but primarily from the same groups of people as in the election before." Therefore, in 1862, Republican turnout fell more than Democratic turnout;

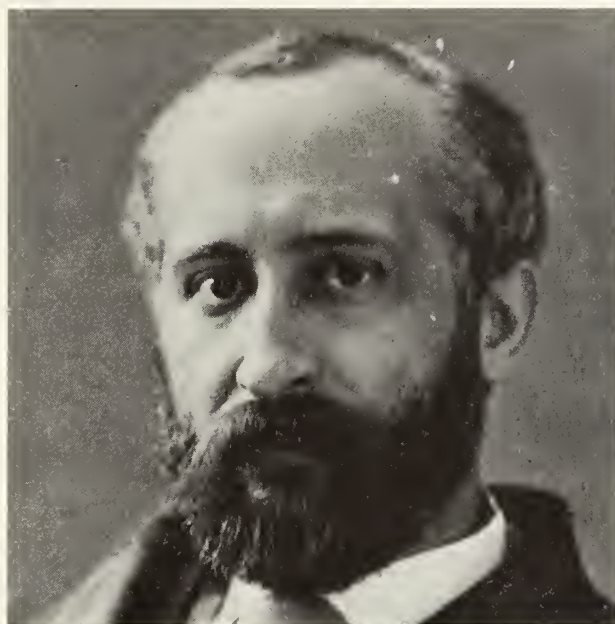
in other words, Democratic success was built on Republican stay-at-homes. The Democratic disaster of 1863 was, in fact, a one-state disaster: Vallandigham's attempt to become Governor of Ohio caused a Republican landslide in that state, but elsewhere the Democrats were only a little off their very good percentages of the previous year. In addition, they performed rather well, though still losing, with peace candidates in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. Silbey relies on correlations with previous elections and on checks of reversals at the county level to see whether Democratic turnout was normal and whether the geography of partisan advantage changed radically.

In 1864, the Democrats' new-found unity (they had not run as a united national party for some time) did not bring them success. Relying again on the work of political scientists, this time Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes in *Elections and the Political Order*, Silbey argues that the Democrats were victims of "valence" issues rather than "position" issues. No particular and specific policy recommendation made the Democrats too unpopular to win. Valence issues, the linking of parties "with some condition that is positively or negatively valued by the electorate," were their downfall. Silbey's chapter title tells the whole tale: "The Smell of Treason Was on Their Garments."

Silbey makes a virtue of the Democrats' consistency. He argues that they never really pursued a minority party strategy, despite their minority status after 1860. Vote-maximization was a goal pursued only within the confines of party identity. Their unity was built of inherited prejudices and loyalties and of consistent ideological orientation.

At one point, Silbey explains that he "made no effort to delineate precisely the numbers in each group or the nature of the socioeconomic and/or psychological elements shaping individual commitment to one group or another. This needs to be done and should be, building through state-level studies toward a national synthesis. Again, however, what is critical for my purposes is that such divisions existed and helped shape the behavior of a minority party seeking to recover control of the political process. Therefore, though the precise components of the various internal groups which were the sources of the shaping is an important matter, in sketching in a general strategic and tactical picture such description becomes somewhat less relevant I believe." And he warns in his preface that his is "an anatomy of party history, an attempt to provide a framework for understanding by sketching the landscape over which the Democrats had to travel, the nature of the partisan network of leaders and voters, and their perceptions and ideas, and the interaction among them, probing the boundaries and nature of the complex relationships that shaped the actions and determined the route the Democrats followed on the political landscape."

Certainly in an area of study where our understanding is as primitive as is the case in the study of the Civil War Democracy, we need rough trailblazing. There is reason for a tentatively broad and comprehensive look. At times, however, Professor Silbey's statements become so blandly broad that they amount to little more than common sense reinforced by sociological jargon. He seems at times to say: the Democrats were a party and wanted to win a majority of votes but could not do so at the expense of taking over the platform of their more popular adversaries. Adding a few fancy names to an analysis of the election of 1864 does not necessarily help much either. "Position" and "valence" issues may have been the nub of the matter, but do those words change what we have thought for a long time? Though the Democrats were a loyal opposition, they went down to defeat in 1864 amidst unfair Republican charges that they were treasonous Copperheads. Does this statement of the conventional wisdom on the



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FIGURE 2. Manton Marble was the influential editor of the *New York World*, a Democratic newspaper generally aligned with the "Legitimist" wing of the party.

nature of the election say anything less than Silbey does?

Whether the broadly sweeping approach is the proper one seems to be a serious problem. Here is another example. Silbey sees as a milestone in party history Clement Vallandigham's "Address of Democratic Members of the House of Representatives of the United States, To the Democracy of the United States," published May 8, 1862. It "dramatically signaled the formal revival of partisanship by a major group of national Democratic leaders and intensified interest in building up the tactical plans necessary for party victory and the consequent preservation of cherished principles and values," says Silbey. This is his summary of the Address:

The bulk of the Address was an arraignment, first, of administration policies which were destroying the Union and, second, of the easy assumption that the Democratic party should be disbanded in order for the war to be carried on more effectively. Democrats recognized the need to support the government "in all constitutional necessity, and proper efforts to maintain its safety, integrity and constitutional authority." But that is not what was being asked of Democrats. They were being asked "to give up your principles, your policy, and your party, and to stand by the Administration in all its acts." This they could never do, particularly for the sake of the country. The Democratic party is the only party capable of carrying on a war; it is the only party that has ever conducted a war to a successful issue, and the only party which has done it without abuse of power, without molestation to the rights of any class of citizens, and with due regard to economy . . . If success, then, in a military point of view be required, the Democratic party alone can command it.

Looked at from a closer perspective, the Address seems different. Vallandigham's capable biographer, Frank Klement, gives the Address rather a different interpretation, and Silbey certainly invites a comparison when he says in his footnote about the Address that Klement's book discussed the

Democratic meeting which produced the Address. This is Klement's summary of the meaning of the Address:

. . . he formed an ad hoc committee to prepare a statement of Democratic faith and tried to impose his antiwar views upon the other members. Some of the self-styled War Democrats, however, fully aware that Vallandigham's reputation as an antiwar man hurt rather than helped the party, used delaying tactics to nullify his leadership. Peeved and impenitent, Vallandigham then wrote a statement in collaboration with William A. Richardson of Illinois, tacked on the names of most Midwestern Democrats, and published it under the title "Address of the Democratic Members of the Congress to the Democracy of the United States." The document urged conciliation and compromises, recommended use of the ballot box to change the direction of events in the country, and asserted that states alone had the right to touch slavery . . . The . . . address emphasized the worthiness of states' rights doctrine, restating the views of Jefferson and Calhoun. It tied the Democratic party to the past, promising to reconstruct the Union upon prewar ideas and with prewar institutions. . . . The document tried to foist the slogan "The Constitution as it is, the Union as it was" upon the Democratic party.

Vallandigham's action helped to widen the schism already existing within the Democratic party. Some of those whose names had been attached to the address were incensed or embarrassed. "I think no document ought to have been sent out," wrote one who found his name listed as a sponsor, "which was not acceptable to the majority of our party." Astute Democrats like Manton Marble . . . recognized the weaknesses of the abortive document. It abounded with "uncandid aspersions" and failed to condemn the Southern rebels. Marble viewed the latter as inexcusable. He also recognized that the document was "a monstrous anachronism."

Instead of unity, Klement saw conflict within the party over Vallandigham's Address.

To look at still another source on the Address is to see that the conflict it aroused followed an interesting pattern. In the biography of Vallandigham written by his brother James, the production of the Address seems even more exciting. "He prepared an address which, after much delay and difficulty," James wrote, "was signed by twelve Democratic Representatives from the West (six of them from Ohio), and by two from Pennsylvania, and one from New Jersey; all the other Eastern members except one, and four of the Western, refusing peremptorily to sign it." Clearly, the party was split along sectional lines, and the Eastern wing wanted to have nothing to do with so extreme a spokesman as Vallandigham.

Silbey's approach is broad, too, in the sense that it does not focus on individual leaders but on the great mass of Democratic voters. One problem encountered as a result of this approach is symptomatic of a more general problem that plagues the study of political history in America today. Silbey constantly asserts — indeed, it is a major thesis of the book — that the party did not operate exclusively as a machine for vote-maximization. Rather, Purists always pulled the opportunists back to the bedrock of party beliefs. The Democrats, he says, agreed on a conservative ideology of "militant constitutionalism and a determination to remain in the organization of their fathers." Thus Silbey's Democrats were consistent in partisan impulse or habit and in belief.

From 1862 on, the Democratic leaders developed an extensive critique of the Republican administration. Their arguments grew out of an ideology rooted in their traditions and experiences and the perceptions developed in their past about the role and power of government, about the nature of

the Constitution, and about the direction of racial and social policy within the nation. Whatever new problems the war introduced into American life, the Democrats responded in their usual ways. There was, therefore, a timelessness, a static quality to their arguments. A new Republican outrage during the war provoked additional violent rhetoric but the overall structure of the Democratic argument remained basically the same from the first day to the last.

As Republican policies began to take on the aspect of a social revolution in Democratic eyes, "The Democrats believed they were in a battle between two cultures, two nations." In sum, "Democratic traditionalism in rhetoric and in belief was the most dominant aspect of their response to the war, the Lincoln administration, and their own minority status."

Although Silbey has read editorial opinion in selected newspapers and has studied party platforms, he does not really attempt the kind of study of party rhetoric which would confirm or deny his thesis for certain. In truth, it is not fashionable to make such studies. Silbey's approach, that of studying the party *en masse*, is all the rage and discourages more traditional approaches to party history. Yet, as is often the case, the conclusions of such studies *en masse* are about ideology and expressions of belief more than they are about measurable and quantifiable behavior.

In the final analysis, Professor Silbey has a strangely sentimental view of the nature of political parties. In his preface he tells us that vote-maximization was not the whole story of party history. "The party often needed more than victory: it also needed to retain its soul." That parties have souls would be news to many a quantifier of electoral behavior. Silbey may be right, but only studies of party rhetoric and of the principles and beliefs of party leaders will prove it.

One brief excursion into such study may serve to suggest caution in accepting the view that the Democrats were a consistent, ideologically conservative party of constitutional timidity. Looking at the nearest party ideology, that of Fort Wayne, I find less consistency and less legitimacy in the Democratic party. Amidst rumors that war had actually broken out in April of 1861, the Democratic newspaper seemingly blurted out its doubts: "what right have we to seek to force our southern brethren to remain in the Union when they are resolutely determined hereafter to govern themselves?" Only a standing army and military despotism would keep a reluctant South in the Union, and the Union might as well not exist, for it would have lost its essential identity as a free country. After Stephen Douglas gave some national guidance in another direction, and after some savvy second thoughts, the local party supported the war effort. In fact, it supported it so wholeheartedly that it came to endorse the arrest of the members of the Maryland legislature by Federal authorities who suspended their privilege of the use of the writ of *habeas corpus* in order to keep them from meeting to pass a secession ordinance. "While we entertain the strongest reverence for the writ of *habeas corpus*, and object to its being set aside for any ordinary grounds, we admit there are conditions when the safety of the country may require it," said the paper. It also admitted the necessity of censoring the war news in the press and urged the adoption of military conscription as the only way to equalize the burdens of the war (New England, it claimed, did not fill its quotas). Months later, complaints about the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, censorship, illegal arrests, and soulless conscription would become the stock-in-trade of local Democratic ideology. It would require a considerable metaphysician to locate the soul in this party newspaper.

As broad as Silbey's conclusions may be, he still produces intelligible conclusions and, on the whole, delivers what he promises: an overall scheme of Democratic party history for the Civil War era. Dozens of scholars, graduate students, and

local historians will go to work now and perhaps find objections, nuances, and twists to the story of the party that Professor Silbey never expected. But without his model to begin with, they would all be lost on uncharted waters. To the first explorer goes the bulk of the glory of discovery.

One hates to end on a sour note, but book lovers everywhere should take alarm at this production. That a major publisher like W. W. Norton & Company could produce such an appallingly bad example of the bookman's art is a sad comment on the depths to which the publishing industry has fallen. The footnotes are at the bottom of the page, but, oh, what a price we pay for this one good point. The book is riddled with typographical errors. Here are a few: "They" for "The" (page xi), "principle" (page 11), "outbteak" for "outbreak" (page 45), "adolitionist" (page 83), "marital" for "martial" (page 87), and "opposd" (page 110). Nor did the publishers offer Professor Silbey much in the way of editorial assistance. On page 27, the editor allowed the author to use "if" for "whether" to introduce a noun clause. On page 28, the editor allowed the use of "destructionaries" as though it were a word. On page 29, the editor let "hopefully" mean "it was hoped" rather than what it really means, "in a hopeful state." Examples from those three consecutive pages indicate the quality of Norton's editorial standards, and this is not a matter of finicky taste. A good editor would not allow such unintelligible prose as this: "They verbalized their ideology in order to fight elections and personalized their argument to make it concrete to the individual elector" (page 79).



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FIGURE 3. Clement Vallandigham was the leader of the peace wing of the Democratic party. Nevertheless, at the Democratic convention which nominated McClellan for the Presidency, he moved that the nomination be made unanimous.



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BLACK IMAGES OF LINCOLN IN THE AGE OF JIM CROW

by John David Smith

Editor's Note: The author of this article, John David Smith, joined the staff of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum in June, 1977. He received a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Kentucky, where he studied slavery and the Civil War. His numerous publications include "The Recruitment of Negro Soldiers in Kentucky, 1863-1865" in *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* (October, 1974) and "'Keep 'em in a fire-proof vault'—Pioneer Southern Historians Discover Plantation Records" to appear in *The South Atlantic Quarterly*.

M.E.N., Jr.

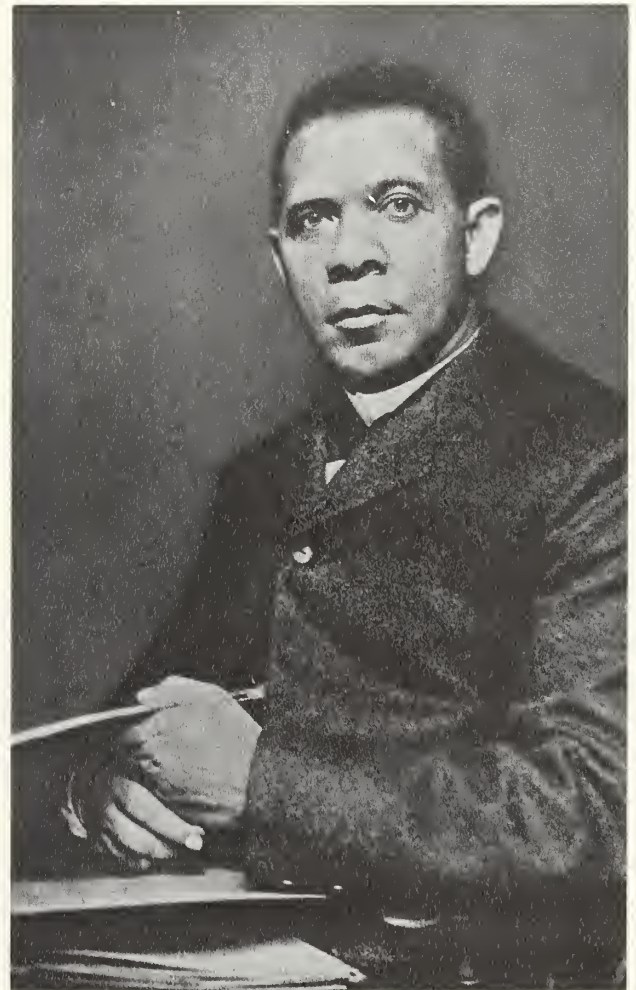
The years 1890-1920, a period of multifaceted reform which historians label the Progressive Era, was anything but an age of progress for American blacks. Driven by a variety of motives, Progressives instituted such diverse reforms as the direct primary, homogenization of milk, sanitation, conservation, and woman suffrage. But the Progressive movement had little interest in blacks and was notably backward looking on the race issue. As C. Vann Woodward has argued, the movement in the South — where almost 90 percent of American blacks lived — was largely "for whites only." And Northern reformers, too, tended to eliminate blacks from the fruits of reform.¹ A different movement was under way in these years which affected Negroes — one characterized by disfranchisement, legalized segregation, and proscription. The age of reaction in race relations bred an unprecedented increase in lynchings and anti-Negro riots, North and South. From 1885 to 1915 almost 3,000 lynchings of blacks were recorded. Racial hostility was at its peak when in August, 1908, one of the most shameful of the race riots broke out in Springfield, Illinois, a city the nation associated with Abraham Lincoln. Blacks were lynched within a short distance of the Lincoln home and within two miles of the Lincoln tomb. The upheaval left Negro businesses destroyed and black families driven from their homes.²

The riot and lynchings at Springfield shocked the national conscience, perhaps moreso because it occurred so close to the centennial of Lincoln's birth. Such mob violence and the general anti-black temper of American society forced blacks to seek ways of advancement either within the narrow sphere allotted them by the whites or by challenging the existing racial status quo. Significantly, many blacks writing in the Progressive Era looked to Lincoln's life in search of ways to combat Jim Crowism. Lincoln's life lent itself to symbolic use because, most black writers argued, it was dedicated to racial equality. Throughout the period Lincoln's imposing character became a silent partner for blacks in their fight against Progressive racism.

Booker T. Washington was the most prominent black leader of the day. He, more than any other Negro author, spread the message which Lincoln's life held for blacks of the Progressive Era. Born a slave in Virginia in 1856, Washington worked his way through Hampton Institute and ultimately became principal of the black vocational school at Tuskegee, Alabama. Washington's long-range goal was the "complete

and unqualified integration of the Negro into American society." But he was a realist; he recognized that the level of discrimination against blacks dictated that the race take gradual steps toward reaching its goal. Consequently, he encouraged blacks to make economic independence their first attainment.³

In simple, pleasing, Christian terms, Washington placated



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 1. Booker T. Washington.

white supremacists and urged blacks to accept the Jim Crow separation of the races as a temporary expedient. With the financial support of Northern philanthropists he transformed the curriculum of Southern schools for blacks. Gradually, an emphasis on vocational training on the Hampton model replaced the classics taught in the Reconstruction period. As an advisor to Presidents Roosevelt and Taft, Washington had special influence on Negro life in the South because he held strong control over patronage for blacks in the region. Even more revealing about his complex personality was Washington's work as a behind-the-scenes activist against anti-Negro legislation and black leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois and William Monroe Trotter who disagreed with his conciliatory racial policy. Washington's thought is difficult to analyze because he "gave a deceptive appearance of freely bowing to Southern demands by repeating much of the white man's propaganda."⁴

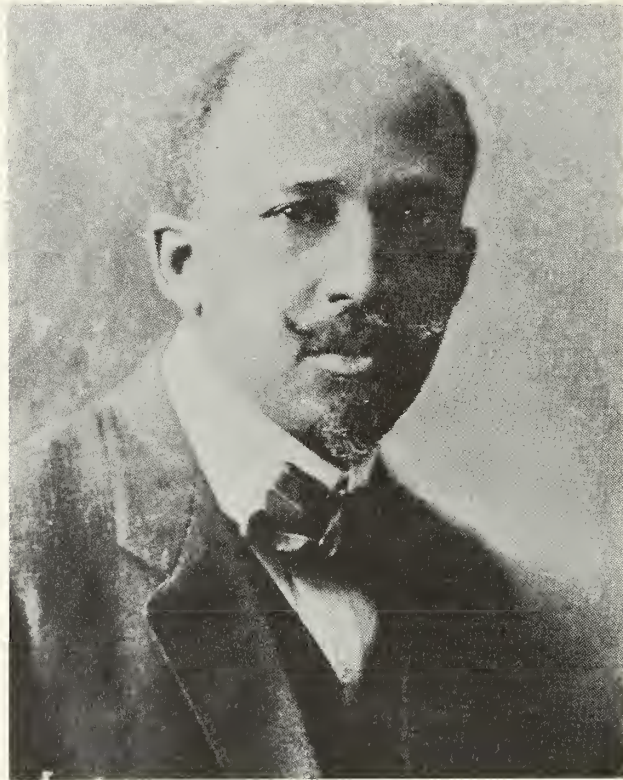
Because he was the most influential American Negro of his age, people listened when Washington spoke. And he spoke often about Abraham Lincoln. On numerous occasions the black leader explained how Lincoln's simplicity and patience, his honesty and determination, offered special messages for Negroes. Washington was keenly sensitive to the use of symbol and imagery in both the printed and spoken word. Lincoln served Washington well in his gospel of self-help and economic advancement — what some contemporary critics denounced as accommodationism.

Washington rated Lincoln a perfect model for blacks. Writing in 1877 to the editor of the *West Virginia Journal*, he cited Lincoln — "who rose from the humble log cabin to the Presidency of the greatest republic on earth" — as an example of the American success story. Like many Southern blacks, Lincoln too was once poor. But he had the courage, resolve, and desire to succeed. Throughout life Lincoln took advantage of things available to him and never despaired at seemingly insurmountable odds.⁵ Washington also employed Lincoln in his many talks and lectures. Usually in a preachy, didactic tone, he idealized the Emancipator and drove home his formula for Negro advancement.

Lincoln read the Bible, said Washington, and he urged his students at Tuskegee to "Read your Bibles every day, and you will find how healthily you will grow." Following in Lincoln's footsteps, blacks were to practice self-denial. "This is the secret of Abraham Lincoln's success in life, that great man, . . . sle[pt] on a bed of leaves without any covering in a log cabin. He practised [*sic*] this self-denial, and it gave him an element of strength which won for him the name of the 'first American.'" Honesty, another trait which Washington associated with Lincoln, was a prerequisite for blacks if they too were to advance. Recounting how scrupulous with government money Lincoln was as a postal clerk, Washington asserted that such honesty "helped him along to the presidency."⁶

Between 1896 and 1909 Washington was a frequent speaker at Lincoln Day celebrations before Northern white audiences. Over the years, although the details and examples which he used varied, his message changed little. First, he shocked the audience by informing them that his earliest recollection of Lincoln was as a slave. "Night after night, . . . on an old slave plantation in Virginia, I recall the form of my sainted mother bending over a batch of rags that enveloped my body, on a dirt floor, breathing a fervent prayer to Heaven that 'Marsa Lincoln' might succeed, and that one day she and I might be free." The Tuskegeean, however, sought not to revive sectional animosities. Instead, he emphasized how Lincoln was the saviour of Southern whites as well as blacks. When the slaves were freed, said Washington, Southern whites too were freed "to breathe the air of unfettered freedom; a freedom from dependence on others' labor to the independence of self-labor; . . . to change the Negro from an ignorant man to an intelligent man; [and] to change sympathies that were local and narrow into love and good will for all mankind."⁷

When addressing groups of Northern philanthropists, Washington asked them how they could "help the South and



Courtesy Library of Congress, from
Dictionary of American Portraits,
Dover Publications, Inc., 1967

FIGURE 2. W.E.B. DuBois.

the Negro in the completion of Lincoln's work?" To achieve "that higher emancipation" — whereby the races would live in true harmony and interdependence — required more and better schools for blacks. When he courted "the active aid and sympathy of every patriotic citizen in the North," the implication was, of course, that Northern dollars invested in Southern black vocational schools like Tuskegee would reap rich benefits for all Americans. Already, he wrote in 1896, blacks had progressed economically and educationally — in the process "proving ourselves worthy of the confidence of our great emancipator." Just as Lincoln emancipated the bondsmen, education now was serving to train blacks in Lincoln's own "habits of thrift, skill, economy and substantial character."⁸

In an age of race-baiting and lynching, Washington counseled blacks not to hate the whites. Like Lincoln, he wrote, the black race must "have the courage to refuse to hate others because it is misunderstood or abused." Virtually advising Negroes not to answer white mobs with force, Washington informed them that "We must remember that no one can degrade us except ourselves, and that if we are worthy no influence can defeat us." The *New York Times* found Washington's tone "remarkable" coming from the leader of a race "recently enslaved and still most unreasonably reviled and despitely treated." The editor predicted that if Lincoln were still alive he would have welcomed the black leader's sound advice.⁹

In spite of his commitment to nonviolence, Washington did not allow the Springfield lynchings and race riot to pass without comment. Recognizing the tragic irony of such mob rule in Lincoln's own Springfield, he urged upon men of both races the importance of putting into daily practice the lessons of Lincoln's life. Patience and understanding, Washington informed an officer of the Lincoln Centennial Association, could not be virtues of blacks alone but had to be practiced by whites too. Washington then rebuked Springfield's white

community for their lawlessness.

... no man [he argued] who hallows the name of Lincoln will inflict injustice upon the negro because he is a negro or because he is weak. Every act of injustice, or law breaking, growing out of the presence of the negro, seeks to pull down the great temple of justice and law and order which he gave his life to make secure. . . . Just in the degree that both races, . . . exhibit the high qualities of self-control and liberality which Lincoln exhibited in his own life, we will show that in reality we love and honor his name, and both races will be lifted into a high atmosphere of serv[i]ce to each other.¹⁰

In stark contrast to Washington on almost all matters concerning their race was William Edward Burghardt DuBois. Proud of his free black origins, DuBois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in 1868. Summarizing his mixed racial background, he claimed to have been born "with a flood of Negro blood, a strain of French, a bit of Dutch, but, thank God! no 'Anglo-Saxon.'" After receiving his Ph.D. in history from Harvard, DuBois went on to become one of America's great black intellectuals. He was a prolific author and a pioneer field researcher in "Negro problems." But it was as a polemicist that DuBois left his mark on Americans, black and white. Denouncing racism in every form, he was an outspoken critic of segregationist practices. In the years after 1903, he became a bitter critic of Washington, who DuBois believed was too conservative, too accommodating to white supremacists. In contrast to Washington, DuBois favored higher education and unqualified equal rights for blacks. Aristocratic, aloof, and arrogant, DuBois demanded respect for Negroes. He never wavered in his battle against what he deemed life under the malignant veil of racism.¹¹

Yet curiously, in most of his writings, DuBois differed little with Washington in his judgments of Lincoln. In 1913, for example, he referred to him as "the great man who began the emancipation of the Negro race in America and the emancipation of America itself." Several years earlier, addressing residents of Chicago's Hull House, DuBois urged his listeners to emulate Lincoln in their deeds and thoughts. Describing Lincoln as "a great man, one of the world's greatest men," the black lecturer pointed to three qualities which made him so: his unusual clearness of vision and thought, his ability to grow intellectually, and his patience in all things. DuBois cited Lincoln as the embodiment of American ideals. From humble origins, Lincoln was never impressed with false pretension. Rather, he established his own criterion for what mattered in life. And because he was contemplative, said DuBois, Lincoln's ideas matured as his responsibilities increased. He cited as evidence of this, Lincoln's position on slavery. When elected to the Presidency, Lincoln was anti-slavery — not radical — on the race issue. But, DuBois stressed, as he gave the plight of blacks additional reflection, Lincoln came to adopt abolitionist principles.¹²

In 1922, DuBois struck a markedly different chord when appraising Lincoln. In doing so, DuBois expressed an undercurrent of black thought that, although voiced infrequently, was harshly critical of the Great Emancipator. Writing in *The Crisis*, the organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, DuBois described Lincoln as . . . a Southern poor white, of illegitimate birth, poorly educated and unusually ugly, awkward, ill-dressed. He liked smutty stories and was a politician down to his toes. Aristocrats . . . despised him, and indeed he had little outwardly that compelled respect. But in that curious human way he was big inside. He had reserves and depths and when habit and convention were torn away there was something left to Lincoln . . . There was something left, so that at the crisis he was big enough to be inconsistent — cruel, merciful; peace-loving, a fighter; despising Negroes and letting them fight and vote; protecting slavery and freeing slaves. He was a man — a big, inconsistent, brave man.¹³

Not surprisingly, DuBois' words were anathema to Lincolnophiles. A flood of letters poured into *The Crisis* stating displeasure with such blasphemous language. But DuBois was ready for his critics. He urged all disbelievers to check the

authenticity of his statements at any library. For those sensitive to his charges of Lincoln's racism he recommended study of the Emancipator's Charleston, Illinois, speech of 1858. It was crucial for blacks, thought DuBois, not to be so uncritical of white heroes like Lincoln. Afro-Americans should search for the truth regarding all men and measures.¹⁴

DuBois admitted that it would be easier to sanctify, to "whitewash" Lincoln. But then the irony of his life would be lost. "I love him," he wrote "not because he was perfect but because he was not and yet triumphed." According to DuBois, the world contained many Abraham Lincolns — lost souls with seamy backgrounds. Lincoln's life could serve as a model for these persons: ". . . personally I revere him the more because up out of his contradictions and inconsistencies he fought his way to the pinnacles of earth and his fight was within as well as without."¹⁵

The strain of criticism of Lincoln suggested by DuBois was more fully developed by black lawyer and civil rights activist Archibald H. Grimké. Born a slave in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1849, Grimké was a nephew of the famous Grimké sisters. A graduate of Lincoln University and Harvard Law School, he served as U.S. Consul in Santo Domingo from 1894-1898. Like DuBois, Grimké was an early supporter of Washington's philosophy for Negro advancement but grew dissatisfied and became a leading force in the N.A.A.C.P. In Washington's opinion, Grimké was "a noisy, turbulent and unscrupulous" individual "more bent upon notoriety and keeping up discord than any other motive." An outspoken critic of Jim Crow laws, Grimké testified before Congressional committees on the deleterious effects of segregation and disfranchisement on blacks and whites. A distinguished black historian, he was awarded the N.A.A.C.P.'s Spingarn medal in 1919 — the highest achievement for an Afro-American citizen.¹⁶

Grimké was very critical of Lincoln, and to idolaters of the Great Emancipator he must have seemed "noisy, turbulent



Courtesy Moorland-Spingarn
Research Center, Howard
University

FIGURE 3. Archibald H. Grimké.

and unscrupulous." What troubled Grimké most about Lincoln was how far short he fell when compared with abolitionist leaders such as Charles Sumner and William Lloyd Garrison. The author of biographies of these men, Grimké chided Lincoln because "At no time before or after his election to the Presidency" was he "a friend of the slaves in the same sense" as were the two Massachusetts abolitionists. "It is the universal vogue now to sing the praises of Mr. Lincoln," wrote Grimké in 1900, "and I too will join heartily and without stint in all merited panegyric upon his greatness." But there were limits to how far he would go.¹⁷

Grimké accused Lincoln of never holding a strong commitment to abolishing slavery. Rather, he idolized the Constitution — "with all of its slave compromises" — and was dedicated to preserving the Union — "with its shameful inequality and oppression of the blacks." Grimké faulted Lincoln because abolition "was never his life purpose." For Lincoln, charged Grimké, "The right of the slave to freedom had no more practical weight . . . when set over against the peace or prosperity, or preservation of . . . [the] Union, than would have had, if such a thing was possible, the right to freedom of the imaginary inhabitants of Mars." Grimké found Lincoln especially vulnerable to criticisms of his lethargy in dealing with the problem of slaves entering Federal lines during the Civil War. "He was strangely slow and reluctant to change his policy on this question, strangely averse from abating one jot or tittle of the laws on the national statute book in favor of the masters."¹⁸

Grimké lamented that the Emancipation Proclamation was inspired by practical considerations, not humanitarian values. Lincoln was not a true friend of human liberty and the Negro race in the spirit of Sumner or Garrison, he said. Grimké urged blacks to revise their opinions of Lincoln: ". . . let us be done, once and forever, with all this literary twaddle and glamour, fiction and myth-making." He asked members of his race to challenge the "wonder-yarns which white men spin of themselves, their deeds and demigods." But his argument went beyond whether Negroes should idolize or criticize Abraham Lincoln. Grimké used his assault on the Sixteenth President as a forum from which to incite Progressive Era blacks to make their own judgments; to assert their own feelings and opinions.

It seems to me [wrote Grimké] that it is high time for colored Americans to look at Abraham Lincoln from their own standpoint, instead of from that of their white fellow-citizens. We have surely a point of view equally with them for the study of this great man's public life, wherein it touched and influenced our history. Then why are we invariably found in their place on this subject, as on kindred ones, and not in our own? Are we never to find ourselves and our real thought on men and things . . . for fear of giving offence? Are we to be forever a trite echo, an insignificant "me too" to the white race in America on all sorts of questions . . . ? Is it due to some congenital race weakness, or to environment, to the slave blood which is still abundant in our veins, that we rate instinctively and unconsciously whatever appertains to them as better than the corresponding thing which appertains to ourselves . . . ? Are we never to acquire a sense of proportion and independence of judgment, but must go on with our brains befuddled with the white man's prodigiously magnified opinion of himself and achievements? . . . For if we are ever to occupy a position in America other than that of mere dependents and servile imitators of the whites, we must emancipate ourselves from this species of slavery. . . . With whom then can we more appropriately begin this work of intellectual emancipation than with Abraham Lincoln, the emancipator?¹⁹

Years before the turn of the century black Americans looked to Abraham Lincoln for inspiration and meaning in life. He was a symbol of hope for the freedmen; his name was a watchword for victory and freedom. Lincoln's image came to have a special significance for blacks in the Progressive Era — the

nadir in the history of race relations in America. Racial equality in these years was at best a pipe dream. Lynchings, mob action, disfranchisement — humiliations of all kinds — characterized the reality of black life. It was to Lincoln that blacks again turned in their search for guidance, for an explanation of their proscribed world. The conflicting ideologies of black leaders like Washington, DuBois, and Grimké were mirrored in their interpretations of Lincoln. Washington, ever complex in motive and method, represented the attitudes of most Negro Americans: Lincoln was a Christ-like figure. Surprisingly, DuBois was more favorable in his judgments of Lincoln than might be suspected. Still, he was quick to note Lincoln's inconsistencies, especially his view of colonization as the best method of disposing of the "problem" of the American Negro. Grimké used his criticisms of Lincoln to communicate a broad message to his race: blacks must question and probe. Filiopietism of white leaders would no longer serve the best interests of blacks. For Washington, DuBois, and Grimké, Lincoln's life was filled with lessons — lessons in love, humanity, and realism.

Notes

¹Woodward, "Progressivism — For Whites Only," *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge, 1967; orig. pub., 1951), pp. 369-395.

²William English Walling, "The Race War in the North," *The Independent*, LXV (September 3, 1908), 529-534; James L. Crouthamel, "The Springfield Race Riot of 1908," *Journal of Negro History*, XLV (July, 1960), 164-181.

³Samuel R. Spencer, *Booker T. Washington and the Negro's Place in American Life* (Boston, 1955), p. 195.

⁴Claude H. Nolen, *The Negro's Image in the South* (Lexington, 1968), p. 146.

⁵Louis R. Harlan, ed., *The Booker T. Washington Papers* (5 vols.; Urbana, 1972-1976), II, 73.

⁶*Ibid.*, III, 93, 130-131; IV, 514.

⁷Washington, *Address of Booker T. Washington Principal of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama, Before the Union League Club, Brooklyn, February 12, 1896* [n.p., 1896], pp. 1, 2.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 3, 8; Washington, *An Address By Booker T. Washington, Prin., Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama* [n.p., 1898], p. 3; *Address of Booker T. Washington Principal . . . February 12, 1896*, pp. 7, 8.

⁹Washington, "Lincoln and the Black Man," *The Congregationalist and Christian World*, February 6, 1909, p. 176; *New York Times*, February, 13, 1909.

¹⁰Letter to James R.B. Van Cleave, February 9, 1909, in Springfield (Ill.) *News*, February 13, 1909.

¹¹DuBois, *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil* (New York, 1969; orig. pub., 1920), p. 9.

¹²DuBois, "Resolutions at Cooper Union on Lincoln's Birthday," *The Crisis*, V (April, 1913), 292; "Abraham Lincoln," *The Voice*, IV (June, 1907), 242, 243.

¹³DuBois in *The Crisis*, XXIV (July, 1922), 103.

¹⁴DuBois, "Again, Lincoln," *The Crisis*, XXIV (September, 1922), 199-201.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 199, 200.

¹⁶Grimké, "Why Disfranchisement is Bad," *Atlantic Monthly*, XCIV (July, 1904), 72-81; Washington quoted in August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915* (Ann Arbor, 1971; orig. pub., 1963), p. 243; Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro* (London, 1970; orig. pub., 1954), pp. 364-367.

¹⁷Grimké, "Charles Sumner," *The American Negro Academy Occasional Papers No. 14* (Washington, 1911), p. 15; "Abraham Lincoln," *Howard's American Magazine*, IV (March, 1900), 353.

¹⁸Grimké, "Abraham Lincoln," pp. 354, 355.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 355, 358, 352-353.



Lincoln Lore

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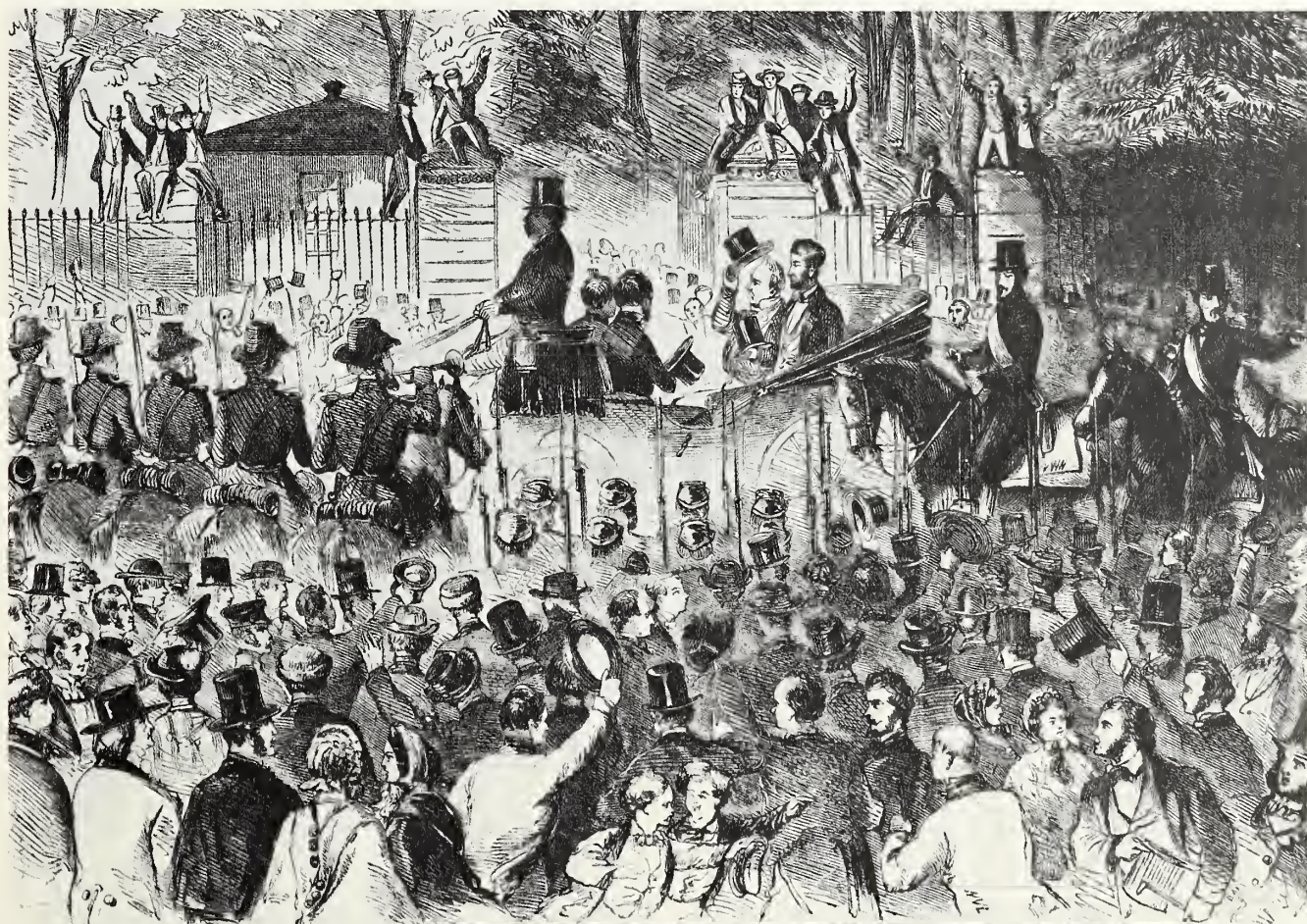
Number 1685

FIVE EX-PRESIDENTS WATCHED THE LINCOLN ADMINISTRATION

Presidents who retire from office are expected to become "elder statesmen." Former President Richard M. Nixon seems currently to be bidding for that status by promising to speak occasionally "in non-political forums." He will stress foreign policy, he says, because partisanship is supposed to end at America's shores. He promises to be above the partisan battles of the day; he will become an elder statesman.

In Lincoln's day, Presidents who left office did not automatically assume the status of elder statesmen. The five surviving ex-Presidents in 1861 — Martin Van Buren, John Tyler,

Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan — did have enough reputation for being above the party battles for it to be suggested more than once that they meet to find remedies for the secession crisis. That such a meeting never took place is eloquent testimony to the weakness of the non-partisan ideal in the nineteenth century. The broad public did not regard these men — and the ex-Presidents did not regard each other — as passionless Nestors well on their way to becoming marble statues. They proved, in fact, to be fiercely partisan.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Lincoln met two former Presidents shortly before his inauguration in 1861. Millard Fillmore greeted him in Buffalo, New York, and he met the incumbent, James Buchanan, twice in Washington. Reporters indicated that in both cases Lincoln chatted amiably, but no one knows the subjects of their conversations.

It was an irony that John Tyler came nearest to assuming an official status as a nonpartisan adjudicator in a conference meant to reconcile the sections, for he would later demonstrate the greatest partisan difference from the Lincoln administration of any of the former Presidents. By November of 1860, Tyler already thought it too late for a convocation of representatives of all the states to arrive at a compromise settlement which would save the Union. He did recommend a meeting of "border states" which would bear the brunt of any sectional war in the event a compromise was not reached. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri could at least arrange a peaceful separation of the South if they could not keep the Union together. Tyler's proposal never bore fruit, but, when the Virginia General Assembly proposed a peace conference of all states in Washington for February, 1861, Tyler became one of Virginia's five commissioners at the convention. The delegates in Washington elected Tyler president of the conference unanimously, but the convention was so divided in voting on recommendations that it was largely ignored by Congress. Tyler returned to Virginia and became an advocate of secession. When urged to lead a compromise movement after the fall of Fort Sumter in the spring, Tyler thought it hopeless. Lincoln, he said, "having weighed in the scales the value of a mere local Fort against the value of the Union itself" had brought on "the very collision he well knew would arise whenever Fort Sumter was attempted to be reinforced or provisioned." In November, Tyler was elected to serve in the Confederate House of Representatives. Far from becoming an elder statesman, John Tyler played a role in destroying the nation which had once elected him Vice-President.

FIGURE 2. Millard Fillmore.

Millard Fillmore despised Republicans as threats to the Union he loved and had once helped to preserve (by supporting the Compromise of 1850). In the secession crisis, he felt that the burden lay upon Republicans to give "some assurance . . . that they . . . are ready and willing to . . . repeal all unconstitutional state laws; live up to the compromises of the Constitution, and . . . treat our Southern brethren as friends." Nevertheless, he disagreed with the cautious policy of lame-duck President James Buchanan, who felt that the government had no authority to "coerce a state." The men who passed ordinances of secession, Fillmore argued, should be "regarded as an unauthorized assembly of men conspiring to commit treason, and as such liable to be punished like any other unlawful assembly engaged in the same business."

Though no one knows how Fillmore voted in 1860, it is doubtful that he voted for Lincoln. It seemed awkward, there-

fore, when Fillmore was Lincoln's official host during his stay in Buffalo, New York, on the way to Washington for the inaugural ceremonies. Fillmore took him to the First Unitarian Church in the morning and at night to a meeting in behalf of Indians, but no one knows what they talked about.

When war broke out in April, Fillmore rallied quickly to the colors. Four days after the fall of Fort Sumter, the ex-President was speaking to a mass Union rally in Buffalo, saying that it was "no time now to inquire by whose fault or folly this state of things has been produced;" it was time for "every man to stand to his post, and . . . let posterity . . . find our skeleton and armor on the spot where duty required us to stand." He gave five hundred dollars for the support of families of volunteers and soon organized the Union Continentals, a company of men too old to fight. Enrolling Buffalo's older men of sub-

stance in the Union cause, the Continentals dressed in colorful uniforms, provided escorts for ceremonial and patriotic occasions, and provided leverage for procuring donations for the Union cause. Fearing British invasion through Canada to aid the Confederacy, Fillmore hounded the government to provide arms and men to protect the Niagara frontier.

Suddenly in February of 1864, Fillmore performed an abrupt about-face. In the opening address for the Great Central Fair of the Ladies Christian Commission in Buffalo, Fillmore rehearsed a catalogue of war-induced suffering and announced that "lasting peace" would come only when much was "forgiven, if not forgotten." When the war ended, the United States should restore the South "to all their rights under the Constitution." Republicans were outraged. The ex-President had turned a nonpartisan patriotic rally into a veiled criticism of the administration's conduct of the war.

Personally, Fillmore felt that the country was "on the verge of ruin." Without a change in the administration, he said, "we must soon end in national bankruptcy and military despotism." The ex-President, once a Whig and a Know-Nothing, endorsed Democrat George B. McClellan for the Presidency in 1864.

After Lincoln's assassination, Fillmore led the delegation which met the President's funeral train and escorted it to Buffalo. This did not expunge from Republican's memories Fillmore's partisan acts of 1864. Nor did it cool his dislike of Republicans. In 1869, he stated that it would be "a blessing to break the ranks of the corrupt proscription radical party, that now curses the country. Could moderate men of both parties unite in forming a new one . . . it would be well."

Among the five living ex-Presidents, none was more hostile to President Lincoln than Franklin Pierce. In 1860, he hoped



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that a united Democratic party would choose Southern candidate John C. Breckinridge. The New Hampshire Democrats endorsed Stephen A. Douglas instead, but Pierce went along with the decision, though without enthusiasm. Lincoln's election was, for this Democratic ex-President, a "distinct and unequivocal denial of the coequal rights" of the states. In a letter written on Christmas Eve, 1861, Pierce urged the South to delay action for six months. If the North did not right the wrongs done the South, then she could depart in peace.

It was hoped that all of the ex-Presidents might attend John Tyler's Washington Peace Conference. Pierce declined, saying that "the North have been the first wrong doers and [he had] never been able to see how a successful appeal could be made to the south without first placing [the North] right." After news of Fort Sumter's fall, however, he reconsidered and wrote ex-President Martin Van Buren, suggesting that Van Buren assemble the former Presidents in Philadelphia to resolve the crisis. He spoke in Concord, New Hampshire, urging the citizens "to stand together and uphold the flag." Van Buren declined to call the former Presidents together and suggested that Pierce himself should. The wind went out of the sails of the idea of an ex-Presidents' peace convention.

Soon, Pierce lost his enthusiasm for the war effort. He made a trip in the summer of 1861 to Michigan and Kentucky to visit old political friends. On Christmas Eve, he received a letter from Secretary of State William H. Seward, then in charge of the administration's political arrests, enclosing a letter from an anonymous source which accused Pierce of making his trip to promote membership in the Knights of the Golden Circle, "a secret league" whose object was "to overthrow the Government." Seward unceremoniously demanded an explanation from the former President of the United States. Pierce indignantly denied the charge, Seward quickly apologized, and it was soon discovered that Seward had fallen for a hoax. An opponent of the Republicans had written the letter to show how far the Republicans would go in their policy of crying "treason" at the slightest provocation.

Pierce sank into despair. He loathed the proscription of civil liberties in the North, detested emancipation, and saw the Lincoln administration as a despotism. The killing of white men for the sake of freeing black men was beyond his comprehension. He thought Lincoln a man of "limited ability and narrow intelligence" who was the mere tool of the abolitionists. He stopped short of endorsing the Southern cause. Old friends avoided him, but Pierce swore never to "justify, sustain, or in any way or to any extent uphold this cruel, heartless, aimless unnecessary war."

At a rally in Concord on July 4, 1863, Pierce courted martyrdom. "True it is," he said, "that I may be the next victim of unconstitutional, arbitrary, irresponsible power." He called efforts to maintain the Union by force of arms "futile" and said that only through "peaceful agencies" could it be saved. Pamphlets compared Pierce to Benedict Arnold, but he persisted and urged the Democratic party to adopt a platform in 1864 calling for restoring the Union by ceasing to fight. Republicans did not forget his actions. New Hampshire provided no public recognition of her son's public career for fifty years after the war.

Martin Van Buren, alone among the ex-Presidents, gave the Lincoln administration unwavering support. He refused Pierce's invitation to organize a meeting of ex-Presidents out of a desire not to be associated with James Buchanan, whose course during the secession crisis Van Buren despised. He had confidence in Lincoln, based probably on information he received from the Blair family, Montgomery Blair being a Republican and a member of Lincoln's cabinet.

There was no more interesting course pursued by an ex-President than James Buchanan's. He had more reason than any other to feel directly antagonistic to the Lincoln administration. Like Pierce, Buchanan had been accused by Lincoln in 1858 of conspiring with Stephen A. Douglas and Roger B. Taney to nationalize slavery in the United States. As Lincoln's immediate predecessor in the office, Buchanan had succeeded in his goal of avoiding war with the South until the new administration came in. The price of this success was the popular imputation of blame on the weak and vacillating course of the Buchanan administration for not nipping seces-

sion in the bud. It was commonly asserted that Buchanan conspired with secessionists to let the South out of the Union. Lincoln's Vice-President Hannibal Hamlin, for example, felt that the Buchanan administration "connives at acts of treason at the South." Despite the findings of a Congressional investigation, many persisted in the belief that the administration had allowed a disproportionate share of arms to flow to Southern arsenals and a dangerously large amount of money to remain in Southern mints. When war broke out, feelings were so strong against Buchanan that he required a guard from the local Masonic Lodge in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to protect his home, Wheatland, from vandalism and himself from personal injury. President Lincoln did not help Buchanan's plight when, in his message of July 4, 1861, he charged that he found the following upon entering office: a "disproportionate share, of the Federal muskets and rifles" in Southern armories, money in Southern mints, the "Navy . . . scattered in distant seas," and Fort Pickens incapable of reinforcement because of "some quasi armistice of the late administration."

Such charges rankled Buchanan, and he spent much of the war years in a careful but quiet attempt to amass documentation which would refute the charges. By late 1862, he had written a book which accomplished this task (to his satisfaction, at least), but he delayed publication until 1866 "to avoid the possible imputation . . . that any portion of it was intended to embarrass Mr. Lincoln's administration." Buchanan's friend Jeremiah Black had doubted that Buchanan could defend his own administration without attacking Lincoln's:

It is vain to think that the two administrations can be made consistent. The fire upon the Star of the West was as bad as the fire on Fort Sumter; and the taking of Fort Moultrie & Pinckney was worse than either. If this war is right and politic and wise and constitutional, I cannot but think you ought to have made it.

Despite the many reasons for which Buchanan might have opposed the Lincoln administration, the ex-President did not. As far as he was concerned, the seceding states "chose to commence civil war, & Mr. Lincoln had no alternative but to defend the country against dismemberment. I certainly should have done the same thing had they begun the war in my time, & this they well knew." Buchanan did not think the war unconstitutional, and he repeatedly told Democrats that it was futile to demand peace proposals. He also supported the draft.

Buchanan considered it too late in 1864 for the Democrats to argue that Lincoln had changed the war's aims. He was pleased to see that McClellan, the Democratic candidate, thought so too. Lincoln's victory in the election, which Buchanan equated with the dubious honor of winning an elephant, caused Buchanan to think that the President should give a "frank and manly offer to the Confederates that they might return to the Union just as they were before." The ex-President's political views were as clearly nostalgic and indifferent to emancipation as those of any Democrat, but he was not among those Democrats who criticized the war or the measures Lincoln used to fight it.

Buchanan spoke of Lincoln in complimentary language. He thought him "a man of honest heart & true manly feelings." Lincoln was "patriotic," and Buchanan deemed his assassination "a terrible misfortune." The two men had met twice when Lincoln came to Washington to assume the Presidency, and Buchanan recalled the meetings fondly, remembering Lincoln's "kindly and benevolent heart and . . . plain, sincere and frank manners." When the Lincoln funeral train passed through Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Buchanan watched it from his buggy.

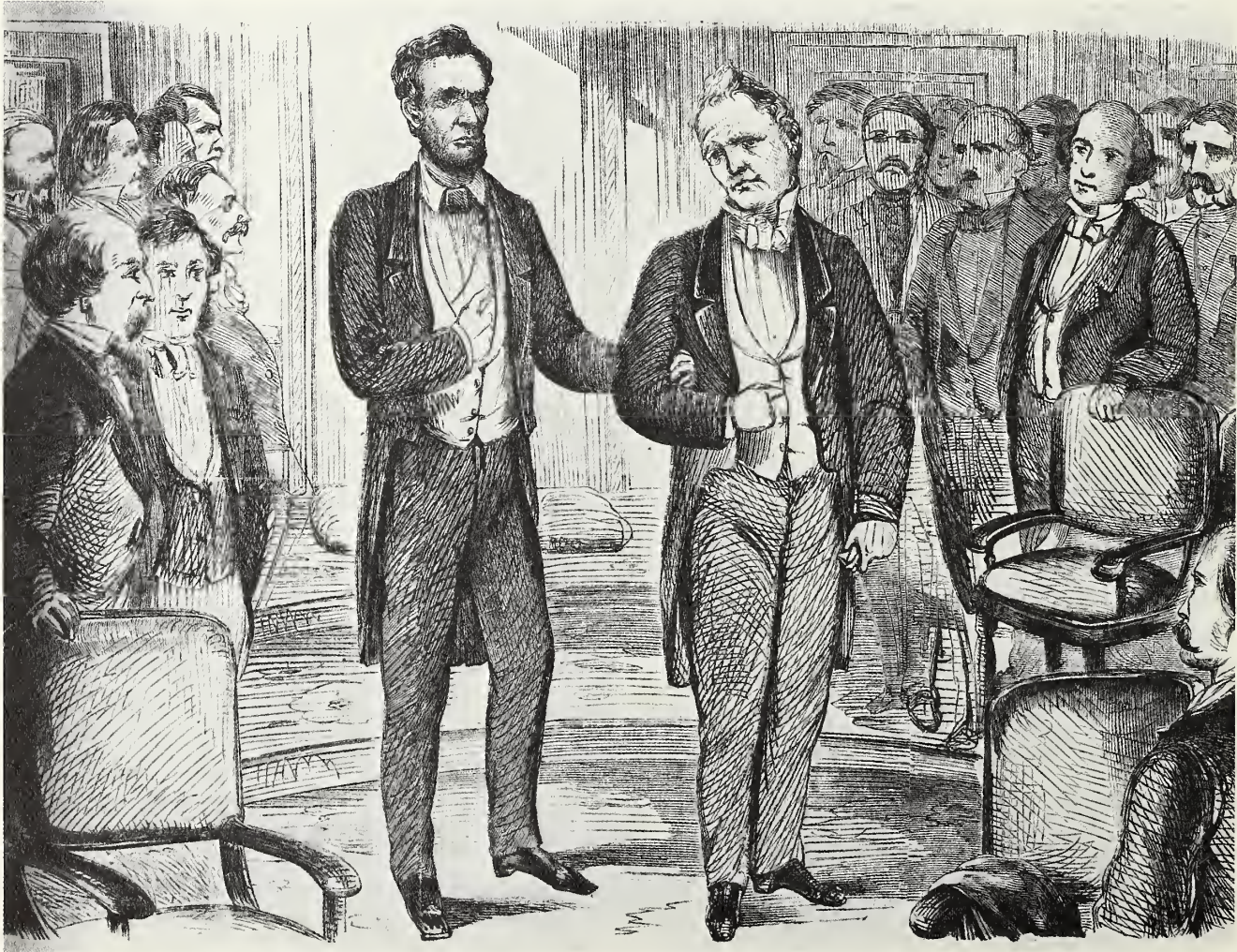
The ex-Presidents benefitted from the Revisionism of historians like James G. Randall. It was their work which rectified the generations-old charge that Buchanan trifled with treason. In some cases, however, this has been a distorting force. Randall's *Lincoln the President: Midstream* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1952) gives the reader an extremely sympathetic portrait of Franklin Pierce in keeping with Randall's view that most Democrats more truly represented Lincoln's views than his fellow Republicans. Thus Pierce appears as the victim of Seward's misguided zeal in the affair of the Knights of

the Golden Circle hoax and, in a particularly touching moment, as the friendly consoler of a bereaved father in the White House. In a horrible train accident immediately before entering the Presidency, Pierce and his wife had witnessed the death of their young son mangled in the wreckage of their car. Therefore, when Willie Lincoln died in 1862, ex-President Pierce sent a letter offering condolences. This is all one learns of Franklin Pierce in Randall's volumes on Lincoln's administration. It is useful to know of his partisan opposition to Lincoln and the war as well, and it in no way detracts from the magnanimity of his letter of condolence. If anything, it serves to highlight the personal depth of feeling Pierce must have felt for the Lincolns in their time of personal bereavement; it allows us even better to appreciate him as a man as well as a politician.

It is easy to forget that Presidents are men. This look at the ex-Presidents of Lincoln's day is a reminder that these men retained their personal and partisan views of the world. It would be hard to imagine an ex-President's club. Van Buren would have nothing to do with Buchanan, though both had been Democrats. Van Buren took the popular view that Buchanan was a "doughface" who truckled to the South instead of standing up to it as Andrew Jackson had done during the Nullification crisis. John Tyler remained a Virginian at heart and cast his fortunes with secession and against the country of which he had been President. Franklin Pierce and Millard Fillmore, the one a Democrat and the other a Whig in their prime,

retained a dislike of the Republican party. Fillmore supported the war with vigor but came to despair of the effort through suspicion that the Republican administration mishandled it. Pierce always blamed the war on Republican provocation and came quickly, and not without some provocation from the administration, to oppose the war effort bitterly. Ironically, James Buchanan, who labored under the heaviest burden of charges of Southern sympathies, was the least critical of the administration of any of the ex-Presidents except Martin Van Buren. Critical of Republican war aims like the rest, Buchanan, nevertheless, supported the war effort and maintained a high personal regard for his Presidential successor. Buchanan thus approached the twentieth-century ideal of an elder statesman.

Editor's Note: The Presidents of Lincoln's era have been rather well served by their biographers. Two splendid examples are Roy F. Nichols's *Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958) and Philip Shriver Klein's *President James Buchanan: A Biography* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962). Robert J. Rayback's *Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President* (Buffalo: Buffalo Historical Society, 1959) and Robert Seager, II's *And Tyler Too: A Biography of John & Julia Gardiner Tyler* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) are useful. There is no careful study of Martin Van Buren's later life. The sketches of these Presidents here are based on these volumes.



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 3. Lincoln and Buchanan did not meet again after this day.



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Pale-faced People and Their Red Brethren

It was inevitable. The civil rights revolution led to a spate of works on Lincoln and the Negro. When the civil rights movement spilled over into crusades for other kinds of people, Lincoln scholarship could not be far behind. The American Indian movement now has its angry equivalent of Lerone F. Bennett's "Was Abe Lincoln a White Supremacist?" (*Ebony*, XXIII [Feb., 1968]). David A. Nichols's *Lincoln and the Indians: Civil War Policy and Politics* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978) is less journalistic and more scholarly than Bennett's uncompromising attack on Lincoln, but, fundamentally, it makes the same unreasonable demand that Abraham Lincoln live up to this century's definition of humanitarianism.

The chapter titles constitute the headings of an indictment: "The Indian System: 'A Sink of Iniquity,'" "Lincoln and the Southern Tribes: 'Our Great Father at Washington Has Turned Against Us,'" "Indian Affairs in Minnesota: 'A System of Wholesale Robberies,'" "Lincoln and Removal: 'A Disagreeable Subject,'" "The President and the Reformers: 'This Indian System Shall Be Reformed,'" "The Failure of Reform: 'The Do Nothing Policy Here Is Complete,'" "Concentration and Militarism," and "Lincolnian Attitudes Toward Indians: 'A Dying Race ... Giving Place to Another Race with a Higher Civilization.'" The tone of the book is indignant, and the message, as with almost all modern books on Indian policy in the nineteenth century, is depressing.

What Nichols proves

and what he laments are two different things. The record of the United States government in Indian policy during the Civil War was deplorable as usual. Lincoln's culpability for this record, however, is not so clearly delineated.

No book in the field yields so clear a view of the developments in Indian affairs during the Civil War. There were really several different Indian problems, each of which ran its course to a different unhappy ending. The Southern tribes (or Five Civilized Tribes), resident by the time of the Civil War in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), were peculiar in that they held Negro slaves and were close to the Confederacy geographically. Despite treaty obligations to protect the tribes on their reservations, the United States abandoned the tribes, who made alliances of convenience with the Confederate States of America. Loyal Indians led by Creek Chief Opothleyaholo fled to Kansas, where they lived the miserable life customary for all war refugees.

Late in 1861, the administration decided to retake the reservations, and by January of 1862, it was decided to use Indians as soldiers in the campaign. Nichols notes that this decision did not have the far-reaching effect of leading to citizenship for Indians that the decision to use Negroes as soldiers would have. He does not give a full analysis of the reasons for the difference in result, but speculation on the subject is illuminating. In the first place, Indians were not vitally and logically linked to the Civil War, as Negroes were. The Indians



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FIGURE 1. Creek Chief Opothleyaholo in a youthful portrait painted long before he led loyal Indians to Kansas in the Civil War.

played the same role that they had played in earlier power struggles on the North American Continent; they were pawns used by the greater powers. From the Indians' perspective, they played their accustomed roles in dangerous diplomacy, trying to pick the side that would win or to maintain neutrality. In the second place, Indians, as always, were divided and hence could be used to fight each other. "These Indians," General Halleck ordered on April 5, 1862, "can be used only against Indians or in defense of their own territory and homes." Using Indians for war was akin to fighting fire with fire. When Indians entered the fray, the conflict was no longer civilized warfare. The fact that they could fight each other instead of white men kept their warfare on the plane of savagery and did not lead to the privileges accorded white soldiers and veterans. Third, there were not enough of them to worry about, and it was widely assumed that their numbers were diminishing towards extinction. There was little need to be concerned about the future of the Indian in American society; he had no future.

The Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, in which a number of Indians fought for the Confederacy, was a defeat for the Confederacy which caused an abandonment of Indian territory. The loyal refugee problem was not solved, however, since the government had to pay to send them back and pay to protect them once they were there. In 1864, the government removed the refugees from Kansas, too late for planting season.

A separate Indian problem was the Sioux uprising in Minnesota in 1862. Nichols devotes about one third of his book to this famous episode in Lincoln's Indian relations. The virtue of his account lies not only in its thorough grounding in manuscript sources but also in its treatment of the Sioux uprising, not as an individual and spectacular event, but as a part of the Lincoln administration's continuing development. Nichols's account is particularly useful in showing the resolution of Indian problem after the famous hangings in Mankato, Minnesota, the day after Christmas, 1862 (see *Lincoln Lore* Numbers 1627 and 1628). The war interested Lincoln for the first time seriously in Indian reform, but the resolution of the Minnesota problem involved no reforms. Minnesota officials and the national government assuaged local resentments over Lincoln's pardoning 265 Sioux prisoners by removing the tribe from the state and keeping the pardoned Indians in confinement. The government also removed the Winnebagos, who had not participated in the uprising, but let the Chippewas stay, probably because they were of special interest to Indian reformer Henry B. Whipple, who had influence with the Lincoln administration.

By 1864, Lincoln had lost interest in Indian reform. The war and reelection preoccupied him. Indian Commissioner Dole tried a policy of concentrating the Indians on a few reservations remote from white settlement, and the military played a larger role than before in dealing with Indians. The Army proved as inept at handling Indians as the Interior Department's notoriously corrupt Office of Indian Affairs. In November, 1864, at Sand Creek, Colorado Territory, white militia massacred hundreds of Indians, killing children, scalping women, castrating men, and butchering pregnant women. News did not reach Washington until January, 1865, but it startled Congress and led to debate, investigation, and, years after Lincoln died, reform.

It is never very inspiring to read about nineteenth-century Indian affairs, and the Civil War years are no exception. The story — though with special nuances of Confederate diplomacy, high drama in Minnesota, and extraordinary brutality in Colorado — is largely the same old story. Because the story continues while Abraham Lincoln is President, however, it becomes noteworthy. Lincoln, Nichols seems to be saying, in order to live up to his reputation should have stopped all of this.

There is no doubt that Lincoln did not alter the course of American Indian policy, but it has always seemed that he had an adequate excuse. Surely he had less opportunity for Indian reform than any President preceeding him except James Madison. Indian affairs were matters of low priority for Lincoln, as Nichols admits on occasion. Lincoln wrote Cherokee

Chief John Ross, for example, on September 25, 1862, explaining that a "multitude of cares" had prevented his examining the treaties between the United States and the Cherokee Nation. Rarely does Nichols forgive Lincoln for his inattention to Indian policy. He repeatedly accuses the administration of procrastination, temporizing, and abandonment — sins of omission which might more charitably be described as preoccupation with larger problems.

Nichols also accuses Lincoln of exploitation, a far more serious charge. Nichols has trouble proving it. His principal reliance is on pointing to what Lincoln would tolerate as proof of Lincoln's policy. Toleration of evil is another sin of omission, however, and could as well be a function of preoccupation with other problems.

In most instances, because of Lincoln's inattention to Indian affairs, Congress played a major role in Indian policy. The settlement of Minnesota's Indian problems, which Nichols characterizes as "Trading Lives for Land and Money," was embodied in legislation passed by the United States Congress. Congress gave Minnesota a \$1.5 million indemnity for losses incurred in the war. Congress appropriated the money to remove the Sioux from Minnesota. Congress appropriated money to remove the Winnebagos from Minnesota. If this was a "Lincoln bargain," as Nichols describes it, it was a bargain on which there was widespread agreement in Washington, D.C.

Often, Nichols assumes that Indian Commissioner William P. Dole's policies were Lincoln's policies. Were Salmon P. Chase's Treasury Department appointees who opposed Lincoln's renomination in 1864, Lincoln's appointees? One must be careful in judging the "Lincoln administration" or "the government." In fact, it remains difficult to describe Lincoln's Indian policy because he made so few statements on the problem and because he took little direct action in Indian affairs.

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FIGURE 2. An advertisement in *Harper's Weekly*.

Nichols's brief treatment of Lincoln's personal experience with Indian affairs before entering the White House typifies his grudging interpretation of Lincoln's actions. He mentions the famous episode in the Black Hawk War in which Lincoln allegedly defended an old Indian who strayed into camp from soldiers who wanted to kill him, but he bases the story on Carl Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*. Benjamin P. Thomas found more reliable evidence for the story. In *Abraham Lincoln: A Biography*, Thomas notes that Lincoln let the story stand in a campaign biography which he carefully corrected for William Dean Howells. Nichols concludes that "Lincoln learned how to use Indian affairs for political advantage" in the Black Hawk War. Yet the nature of that experience is not easily interpreted. In fact, Lincoln returned from the war so late in the summer that he had only two weeks to campaign for the legislature. Moreover, Lincoln must have enlisted, in part, for the same inglorious reasons so many soldiers enlist: he was unemployed (or about to be) and had no family in New Salem. He may have "understood the potency of the Indian-fighter image in the age of Andrew Jackson," but Lincoln never tried to capitalize on such an image. He did not go by the phony title many ex-frontier militiamen did, "Captain" Lincoln, and he confessed plainly that he never saw any "live, fighting Indians" in the war. That he also prided himself on his election as captain was a function of Lincoln's love of democratic praise and seems in no way to constitute capitalizing on his experience, such as it was, as an Indian-fighter.

"Lincoln, in the years before he became president," Nichols says, "apparently never challenged the American consensus on the necessity for Indian removal to make way for white progress." This is really Nichols's basic charge against Lincoln for the Presidential years as well: he failed to challenge the consensus on Indian policy. Nichols shares a view of politics common in America today. His book is sprinkled with a street-slang view of the political process; politicians "play their power games" while the Indians suffer, and Indians are "the pawns of power politics." Nichols is outraged that the Indian Bureau was a part of the patronage system. Everything in Lincoln's government ran on the patronage system — in some sense, even the war. To "depoliticize Indian affairs" was an unrealistic ideal requiring a massive reorganization probably unobtainable in wartime and not guaranteed to solve the

Indians' problems.

The book's one-sidedness can best be seen in its treatment of the formulaic language of Indian relations. This mannered, formal pidgin-English seems quaint and has always troubled historians of Indian relations. In the hands of a historian with a case to make, it can be a powerful tool. Nichols, probably unconsciously, has a tendency to make a mockery of the language when used by whites and to interpret it seriously when used by Indians. Lincoln's comparison of "this pale-faced people and their red brethren," when a delegation of chiefs visited the White House on March 27, 1863, is termed an "incredible recitation" by Nichols. By contrast, Nichols says this of a Cherokee pledge of fealty:

In spite of Lincoln's abandonment of their cause, the Cherokee leaders continued to place faith in the White House after Andrew Johnson assumed office, "Our trust is in your wisdom and sense of justice to protect us from wrong and oppression." That trust in the "great father" was destined to be even more severely tested for the Natives farther north in the Republican state of Minnesota.

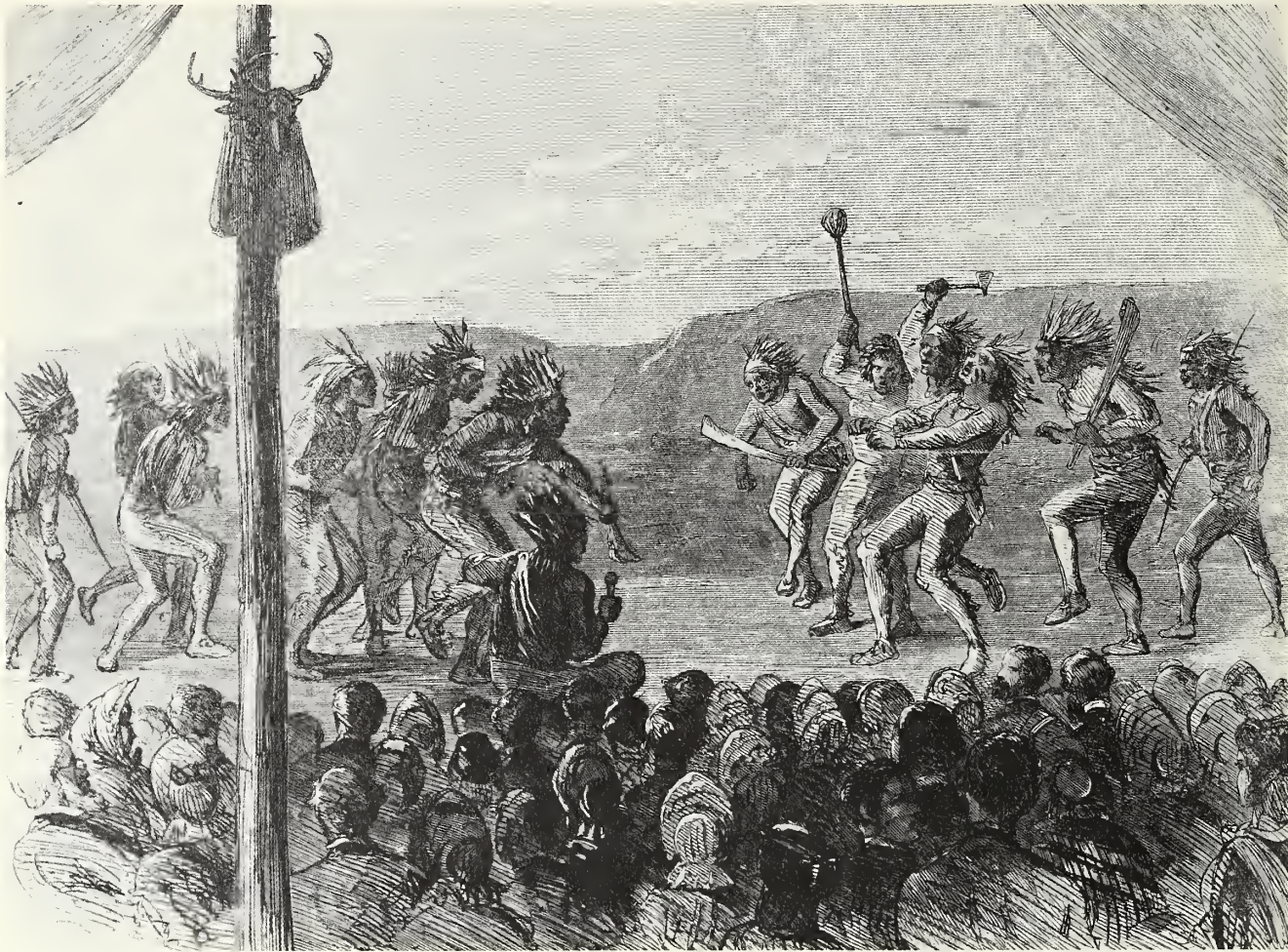
There is no more reason to take formal Indian pledges of trust seriously than there is to take seriously white expressions of bonds of brotherhood between red men and white. There is a tendency, however, in today's climate of sympathy for the Indians to treat only one side of the story with the historian's usual critical tools.

The angry tone and constant straining for high effect by linking the Sixteenth President with distant developments in Indian affairs mar this book. It is otherwise a well-researched, competently written analysis of the major developments in Indian relations under the Lincoln administration. Nichols's publisher, the University of Missouri Press, deserves special praise for a beautifully designed and carefully printed book. The typeface is handsome, the footnotes are at the bottom of the page, there are few typographical errors, and the jacket design is original and attractive. University presses have become practically the last bastions of decent book design in the country. Nichols's *Lincoln and the Indians* fills a void in the Lincoln literature which probably will not need refilling (at book-length) again. However, the reader should proceed with caution. The author's animosity to politics can only distort the image of a man with Lincoln's known fondness for the political arts.



FIGURE 3. "Lincoln Receivait Les Indiens Comanches," a rare French print, showing the Sixteenth President speaking to a delegation of Indian chiefs. Such delegations visited Washington regularly, and greeting them was a heavy burden on the President, the Indian Bureau, and other Washington officials.

From the Louis A. Warren
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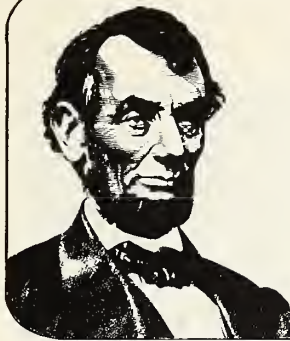
FIGURES 4 — 5. A great attraction at the Metropolitan Fair of the United States Sanitary Commission in New York in the spring of 1864, was the Indian Department. *Harper's Weekly* noted high interest in this exhibit "in which the life of those who, only a little while ago, held undisputed possession of our continent, is reproduced by a handful of the once absolute tribes for the pleasure of the pale-faced race, whose ancestors pushed them into obscurity and historical oblivion."



THE INDIAN DEPARTMENT.

COMMITTEE-MAN. "No, no, WALK-IN-THE-MUD! You musn't go and scalp those ladies. We don't do so here! And your Great Father wouldn't like it!"
WALK-IN-THE-MUD. "Scalpee 'em! Me no want scalpee 'em!—They so nice me want go hug 'em!"
COMMITTEE-MAN. "Oh, is that all! Then you may go. They have a partiality for Distinguished Foreigners."

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum



Lincoln Lore

September, 1978

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
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Number 1687

A "Great Fraud"? Politics in Thomas Ford's *History of Illinois*

Thirty years ago, historians thought Lincoln was most a statesman when he was least a man of party. In general, this meant that Lincoln the President was a statesman, but Lincoln the Whig politician was not. In the period from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, some historians celebrated the practical, compromising politician as the ideal statesman, and for this brief period Lincoln was often pictured as a statesman because he was a skilful politician. This new view never rebounded to the benefit of Lincoln's Whig years, though David Donald argued in 1959 that President Lincoln was merely a "Whig in the White House." The new appreciation for politicians did not extend to the Whig party, which was of little interest to liberal scholars who regarded its affection for banks and tariffs with disdain.

G.S. Boritt's *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* has at last rescued Lincoln's Whig years from the charge of narrow partisanship. But the reasons for the long reign of the view that Lincoln was a petty politician before the White House years have not been adequately explored.

One of the principal reasons is the heavy reliance historians have placed on Thomas Ford's *History of Illinois from Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (Chicago: S.C. Griggs, 1854). It is an appealing book — a minor classic, in fact — written with economy, full of facts and descriptions nowhere else available, and brutally frank.

It is Ford's frankness which has had the greatest appeal. The tone of most nineteenth-century memoirs was pious and earnest rather than cynical, and nineteenth-century state histories were generally celebratory in nature. Ford's book, a state history written almost as a memoir by an active participant in much of the era he describes, is remarkable for its candor about

politics. Himself a politician (Ford was the Governor of Illinois from 1842 to 1846), he viewed the motives of most politicians with cynicism and spoke with the authoritative tone of an insider. Historians anxious for a reliable source which pierced through the customary platitudes and moralisms of nineteenth-century historical writing have devoured Ford's book.

For the early period of Lincoln's involvement with Illinois politics, Thomas Ford's *History of Illinois* is one of the most important sources. It is quoted by everyone. Even Lincoln quoted from it. In the first of his famous debates with Stephen Douglas, at Ottawa on August 21, 1858, Lincoln argued that his opponent had not always bowed to the will of the Supreme Court as readily as he bowed to its will as expressed in the Dred Scott decision.

And I remind him of another piece of history on the question of respect for judicial decisions, and it is a piece of Illinois history, belonging to a time when the large party to which Judge Douglas belonged, were displeased with a decision of the Supreme Court of Illinois, because they had decided that a Governor could not remove a Secretary of State. You will find the whole story in Ford's *History of Illinois*, and I know that Judge Douglas will not deny that he was then in favor of over-throwing that decision by the mode of adding five new Judges, so as to vote down the four old ones. Not only so, but it ended in the *Judge's sitting down on that very bench as one of the five new Judges to break down the four old ones.*

Again, when Lincoln met Douglas at Charleston on September 18th, a heckler asked Lincoln, who was defending Lyman Trumbull's reputation, what Ford's book said about him. Lincoln re-

HISTORY OF ILLINOIS.

FROM ITS

COMMENCEMENT AS A STATE IN 1818 TO 1847.

CONTAINING A

FULL ACCOUNT OF THE BLACK HAWK WAR, THE RISE, PROGRESS,
AND FALL OF MORMONISM, THE ALTON AND LOVEJOY RIOTS,
AND OTHER IMPORTANT AND INTERESTING EVENTS.

BY THE LATE

GOV. THOMAS FORD.

CHICAGO :

PUBLISHED BY S. C. GRIGGS & CO.,

111 LAKE STREET.

NEW YORK: IVISON & PHINNEY.

1854.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Title page of Ford's *History of Illinois*.

plied: "My own recollection is, that Ford speaks of Trumbull in very disrespectful terms in several portions of his book, and that he talks a great deal worse of Judge Douglas."

Ford's *History of Illinois* has played an important role in documenting Lincoln's career. It is one of the principal sources for the charge that, as a member of Sangamon County's "Long Nine," Lincoln had traded support for local internal improvements for votes to move the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield. The book barely mentions Lincoln, however, and its real importance has lain in providing a picture of the political landscape of Lincoln's early career.

A good example of the book's use appears in the first volume of J.G. Randall's *Lincoln the President*:

The politicians' world in Illinois in the day of Lincoln's earlier career has been drawn from life in the vivid pages of Governor Thomas Ford. It was not an inspiring picture. Because of the want of true "issues" and the scramble for favor, as explained by Ford, an election became "one great fraud, in which honor, faith, and truth were . . . sacrificed, and politicians were debased below the . . . popular idea of that class of men." Government might mean one thing to the people; its purpose in the minds of politicians was another matter. They had a "destiny to accomplish, not for the people, but for themselves." With the people caring little for matters of government, said Ford, the "politicians took advantage of this lethargic state of indifference . . . to advance their own projects, to get offices and special favors from the legislature, which were all they busied their heads about." Politicians, he said, operated on the principle that "the people never blame any one for misleading them"; it

was merely a matter of supporting or opposing measures because of their popularity or unpopularity at the time. A "public man," said the governor, "will scarcely ever be forgiven for being right when the people are wrong." That was why "so many" politicians were "ready to prostitute their better judgments to catch the popular breeze." Whatever may have been the basis of parties in their early origin, Ford observed that "little big men, on both sides . . . feel the most thorough hatred for each other; their malice often supplying the place of principle and patriotism. They think they are devoted to a cause, when they only hate an opponent; and the more thoroughly they hate, the more . . . are they partisans." Party newspapers, he thought, promoted and perpetuated this unhealthy state of things.

Ford's candor about political motivation and his seeming nonpartisanship ("little big men" were "on both sides") persuaded many a student of Illinois history that politics were a sordid affair. Since Lincoln's life was thoroughly and inextricably enmeshed with Illinois politics, the result was that historians found in him, perhaps in less exaggerated form, the general attributes of Illinois politicians outlined by Thomas Ford.

The bitterness of Ford's disgust for politics and politicians was extraordinary and was not misrepresented by Randall and other Lincoln biographers who saw Lincoln's early political career as narrowly partisan and crafty. Ford introduces his theme in his discussion of the first Illinois legislature early in the book. "It appears," he said, "by the journals of this first legislature that a committee was appointed to contract for stationery, who reported that they had purchased a



OUR PRESIDENTIAL MERRYMAN.

The Presidential party was engaged in a lively exchange of wit and humor. The President Elect was the merriest among the merry, and kept those around him in a continual roar."—*Daily Paper*.

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Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. *Harper's Weekly* pictured Lincoln swapping stories with drinking politicians, as a hearse carrying the Union and the Constitution passed by.



FIGURE 3. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* pictured the crowd of office-seekers who besieged Lincoln when his administration began.

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sufficient stock at the cost of \$13[.]50. For every dollar then paid, we now pay hundreds for the same articles; but this was in the days of real frugality and economy, and before any of the members had learned the gentlemanly art of laying in, from the public stock, a year or two's supply at home." Surveying the state's political history up to 1830, and "calling to mind the prominent actors in the scenes of that day, the fierce struggles and quarrels amongst them, the loves and the hatreds, the hopes, fears, successes and disappointments of men, recently, but now no more on the stage of action, one cannot but be struck with the utter nothingness of mere contests for office." The old and corrupt methods of politics were carried into the new state. "In those days," Ford said, "the people drank vast quantities of whiskey and other liquors; and the dispensation of liquors, or 'treating,' as it was called, by candidates for office, was an indispensable element of success at elections." The personal politics, intrigue, and disregard of the public welfare practiced in gaining election "were carried . . . into the legislature. Almost everything there was done from personal motives." Ford's message was simple: "Hitherto in Illinois the race of politicians has been more numerous and more popular with the people, than the race of statesmen."

Though Ford's views are exceptional for their disdain for the methods of politics, they have the ring of authenticity because of their lack of partisan flavor. Denunciations of politics and politicians in the nineteenth century were common, but they came most often as denunciations of the practices and practitioners of the opposite party. Ford spared almost no one; Democrat and Whig alike fell before his critical scythe.

Though nonpartisan in his criticism of politicians, Ford was nevertheless far from objective. His *History of Illinois* is colored by a prejudice not against any particular party but against parties themselves — or rather, against politics with or without parties. An especially revealing but little-known article on Ford's *History* in "The Illinois Bookshelf" column in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* for March, 1945, explains the reasons for Ford's peculiarly jaundiced views of the ways of politicians. Despite being an elected official himself, Ford's political success was achieved with a minimum of political effort. In 1835 the state legislature elected him circuit judge. In 1837 he became judge of the Chicago municipal court. In 1839 the legislature elected him circuit judge again, and in 1841 he joined the Illinois Supreme Court. In 1842 the Democratic candidate for governor died, and Ford replaced him with only ten weeks remaining before the election. Despite little time for campaigning, he won election in this overwhelmingly Democratic state. Thus, Ford

served as Illinois's governor without much campaigning and without ever having seen the state legislature at work. What he saw when he gained office must have shocked him. Another factor was Ford's long, painful, and losing battle against tuberculosis. He wrote his *History* in order to gain money for his five children, made indigent by his inability to make a living during his illness. The *History* embodies the bitter observations of a dying man. Ford died in 1850, leaving his manuscript with James Shields, who finally found a publisher for it in 1854.

Despite Ford's shock and disdain for politics, when he wrote his *History*, he could think of no better system than the one he had experienced. In fact, one could legitimately read Ford's book as a sober defense of the two-party system and an attack on the sophistication of the electorate. Throughout his *History*, Ford insisted "that, as a general thing, the government will be a type of the people." Whenever he denounced politicians and politics, he qualified his criticism by laying the ultimate blame on the ignorance or indifference of the people who elected them.

Likewise, when he criticized the political system, he often noted that the alternatives to it were far inferior. Discussing the period in Illinois before the emergence of two-party politics, Ford said:

There are those who are apt to believe that this mode of conducting elections [by personal rather than party contests] is likely to result in the choice of the best materials for administering government. . . . The idea of electing men for their merit has an attractive charm in it to generous minds; but in our history it has been as full of delusion as it has been attractive. Nor has the organization of regular parties, and the introduction of the new principle in elections of "measures not men," fully answered the expectation of its friends. But if the introduction of such parties, supposed to be founded on a difference in principles, has done no other good, it has greatly softened and abated the personal rancor and asperity of political contests, though it has made such contests increasing and eternal. It is to be regretted, however, if there be evils attending the contests of party, that society cannot receive the full benefit from them by the total extinction of all mere personal considerations, personal quarrels, and personal crimination, not necessary to exhibit the genius and tendency of a party as to measures, and which are merely incidental to contests for office. The present doctrine of parties is measures, not men, which if truly carried out would lead to a discussion of measures only. But parties are not yet sufficiently organized for this; and, accordingly, we find at every election much personal bitterness and invective mingled with the supposed contests for

principle. . . . Perhaps the time may come when all these personal contests will be confined to the bosom of one party, in selecting the best candidates to carry out its principles. Ford could thus complain that parties were inadequately organized and denounce a party-less system, the dream of many an elitist critic of American politics.

Ford had no illusions about the workings of party politics; yet he recognized parties as, at worst, a necessary evil. He had a realistic view of party discipline:

The organization of men into political parties under the control of leaders as a means of government, necessarily destroys individuality of character and freedom of opinion. Government implies restraint, compulsion of either the body or mind, or both. The latest improvement to effect this restraint and compulsion is to use moral means, intellectual means operating on the mind instead of the old mode of using force, such as standing armies, fire, sword and the gibbet, to control the mere bodies of men. It is therefore a very common thing for men of all parties to make very great sacrifices of opinion, so as to bring themselves into conformity with the bulk of their party. And yet there is nothing more common than for the race of newspaper statesmen to denounce all such of the opposite party as yield their own opinions to the opinions of the majority, as truckling and servile. They may possibly be right in this. But undoubtedly such submission is often necessary to the existence of majorities, entertaining the same opinion. A little further experience may develop the fact, that when this means of securing majorities shall fail, the government will fall into anarchy.

Unlike many critics of politics and parties, Ford had no fear of majority will. His basic complaint was that majorities were poorly formed and represented, and that bipartisan measures frustrated any responsibility of politician or party to people. His criticism of the Internal Improvements Act of 1837, often pointed to as a glaring example of Lincoln's narrow Whig partisanship, was that it was advocated and passed as a bipartisan measure for the good of the whole state. "The vote in the legislature was not a party vote," said Ford, and

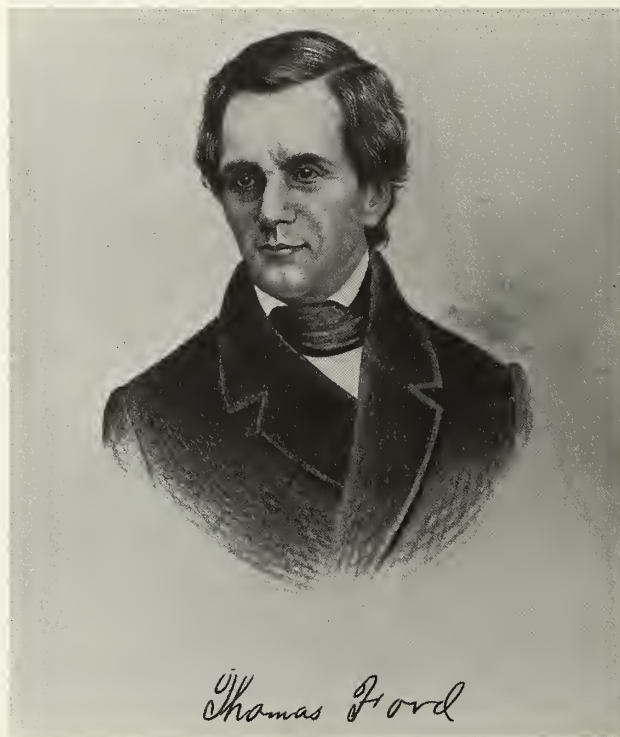
the banks were advocated and supported upon grounds of public utility and expediency; and like on the vote upon the internal improvement system, which followed at the next session, both whigs and democrats were earnestly invited to lay party feelings aside, and all go, at least once, for the good of the country. Whenever I have heard this cry since, I have always suspected that some great mischief was to be done, for which no party desired to be responsible to the people. As majorities have the power, so it is their duty to carry on the government. The majority, as long as parties are necessary in a free government, ought never to divide, and a portion of it join temporarily with the minority. It should always have the wisdom and courage to adopt all the measures necessary for good government. As a general thing, if the minority is anything more than a faction, if it has any principles, and is true to them, it will rally an opposition to all that is done by the majority; and even if it is convinced that the measures of the majority are right, it is safest for the minority to compel the majority to take the undivided responsibility of government. By this means there will always be a party to expose the faults and blunders of our rulers; and the majority will be more careful what they do.

Here Ford advocated the ultimate in the partisan ideal, the benefits of opposition to one party's program even when it seems to be a very proper program. This plea for disciplined, but responsible majorities looked forward to the proposals to institute in America cabinet government on the British model, proposals which were widely put forward towards the end of the nineteenth century.

As a theoretical commentator on the nature of party politics, Ford was unusual in his thoroughgoing defense of disciplined party majorities. In other respects, of course, he was a typical Democrat of his era. He thought that "no farmer ought ever to borrow money to carry on his farm." He blamed the internal improvements mania on "the general desire of sudden and unwarrantable gain; a dissatisfaction with the slow but sure profits of industry and lawful commerce, produced a general phrenzy." His ideal political system looked back to the storybook democracy of the early New England town:

My own opinion of the convention system is, that it can never be perfect in Illinois, without the organization of little township democracies, such as are found in New York and New England; that in a State where the people are highly intelligent, and not indifferent to public affairs, it will enable the people themselves to govern, by giving full effect to the will of the majority; but among a people who are either ignorant of or indifferent to the affairs of their government, the convention system is a most admirable contrivance to enable active leaders to govern without much responsibility to the people.

Thomas Ford's very good book has been used to very bad effect. Historians have used its strictures on the unsavory motives and methods of politicians to criticize political parties; yet Ford was himself a staunch defender of party politics. The book has been mined by historians but generally misread by them. Showing almost a tenderfoot's pique at the methods of state legislators, Ford has been seen as an unimpassioned and objective observer of party politics. The book should be used carefully by students of Lincoln's early political career, but it should be used. It deserves a better fate than historians have thus far allowed it.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Thomas Ford as pictured in the *Portrait and Biographical Album of Sangamon County, Illinois*.



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Number 1696

LINCOLN AND THE HATEFUL POET

No one hated Abraham Lincoln as thoroughly as Edgar Lee Masters did. He could find little to admire in Lincoln's personal character and less in the Sixteenth President's political legacy. Masters's book, *Lincoln: The Man* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1931), was a publishing sensation which caused tidal waves of indignation across America. Today, the book and the controversy over it are almost completely forgotten. The book is deservedly forgotten, but the controversy over it merits some attention. It marked the end of an era in popular literature in America. It was something of a turning point in the career of Lincoln's image in modern America. And it revealed here and there some of the great intellectual currents of that era of depression.

Masters was an unlikely Lincoln-hater. Had he written a book which praised Lincoln, reviewers and critics would have found it easy to explain. They would have pointed to Masters's roots in Lincoln country. Though born in Garrett, Kansas, in 1869, Masters grew up near the site which has prompted more sentimental revery about Lincoln than any other, New Salem. That village became a ghost town even in Lincoln's life, but nearby Petersburg, which took its village life from New Salem's death, survived. There, and in Lewistown, Masters spent his youth. The romance of this Sangamon River country captivated even Masters. His *Spoon River Anthology* (1914), which made Masters famous as a poet, included an oft-quoted epitaph for Ann Rutledge:

Out of me unworthy
and unknown
The vibrations of
deathless music;
"With malice toward
none, with charity
for all."

Out of me the
forgiveness of
millions toward
millions,
And the beneficent
face of a nation
Shining with justice
and truth.

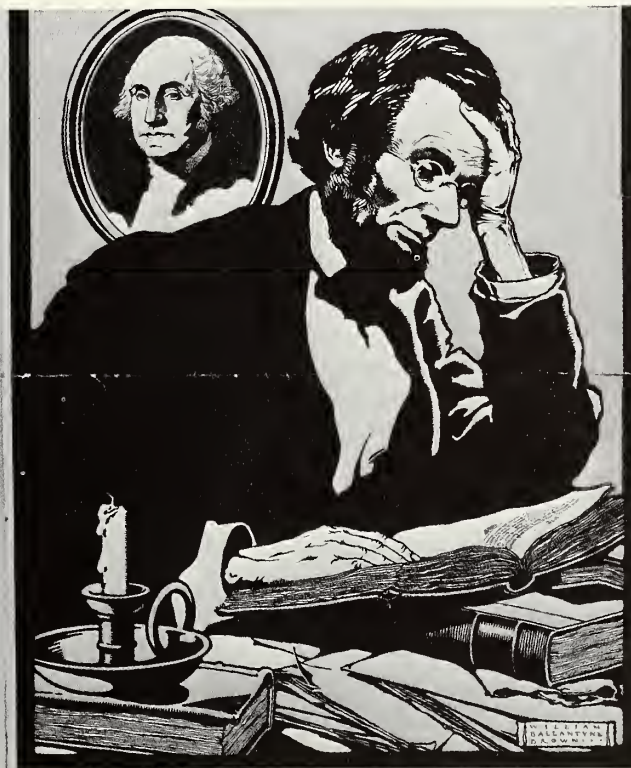
I am Anne Rutledge
who sleep beneath
these weeds,

Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
Wedded to him, not through union,
But through separation.
Bloom forever, O Republic.
From the dust of my bosom!

A closer look at Masters's early years reveals that he was both a part of his environment and a man at odds with it. His grandfather was a Democrat with little sympathy for the North during the Civil War. Edgar Lee Masters's father, Hardin W. Masters, ran away to enlist in the army during the war, but his father brought him back. Hardin Masters became a lawyer and dabbled in Democratic politics. He crossed the prohibition-minded Republicans of Lewistown on more than one occasion.

Edgar Lee Masters continued the family tradition of affiliation with the Democratic party. He too became a lawyer, after graduation from Knox College in Galesburg, and established a practice in Chicago. He continued to practice law somewhat unhappily until his literary career allowed him to give it up in 1920.

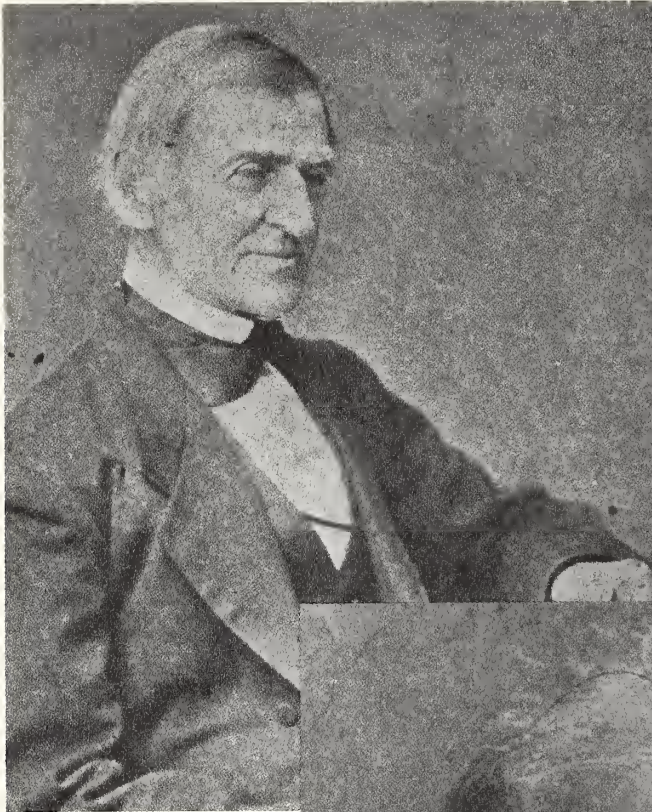
Lincoln: The Man was Edgar Lee Masters's first biography. He had always been interested in politics and in history. Biography was immensely popular in America between the World Wars, in part because a new style of biographical writing titillated the popular imagination. This was the great age of the "debunker," who slayed American heroes in print by the dozens. The prudes and the religiously earnest, like Henry Ward Beecher and William Jennings Bryan, were natural targets for this age of revolt against Victorian morality, but soon the political figures were the objects of attack. George Washington fell to the pen of Rupert Hughes in 1926. *George Washington: The Human Being & The Hero* (New York:



LINCOLN & WASHINGTON
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FIGURE 1. Before World War I, popular magazines dealt reverentially with Lincoln and Washington. Debunking was not the fashion.



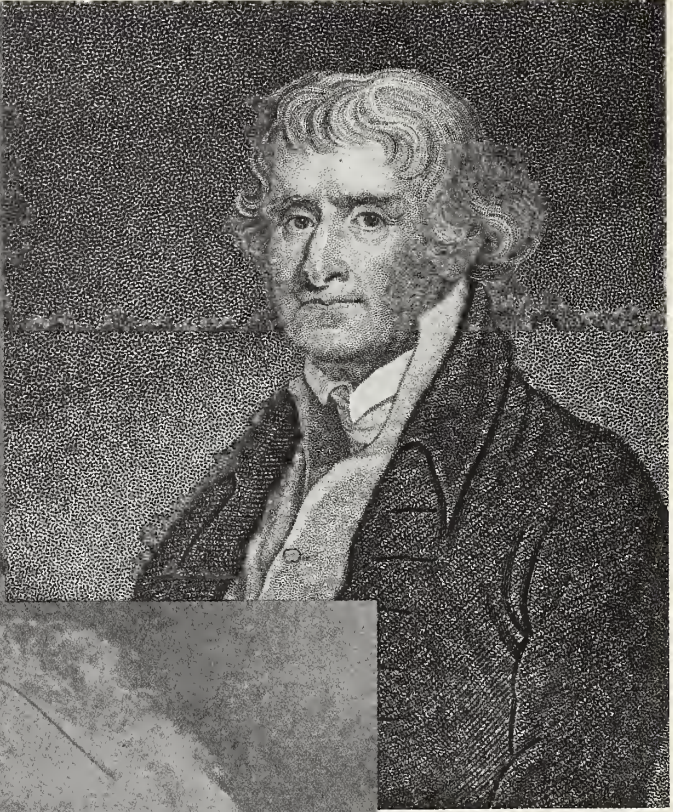
Ralph Waldo Emerson

William Morrow) began by describing George Washington's mother as "a very human, cantankerous old lady" who "smoked a pipe incessantly" and "dragged his pride into the dust by seeking a pension during his lifetime, by wheedlings and borrowings and complaints among the neighbors." Hughes hated Washington's first biographer, "a canting sentimentalist, Parson Weems," and stressed that Washington was not "a man of piety." Chapter XXVIII ended with this characteristic passage:

But George Washington had left old England to her own devices. He was bent upon saving himself first. He was deep in debt. He was betrothed to a woman of great wealth. He was going to marry and settle down to the making of money. Which, after all, is one of the most important duties of any patriot.

Masters wrote in the same debunking spirit.

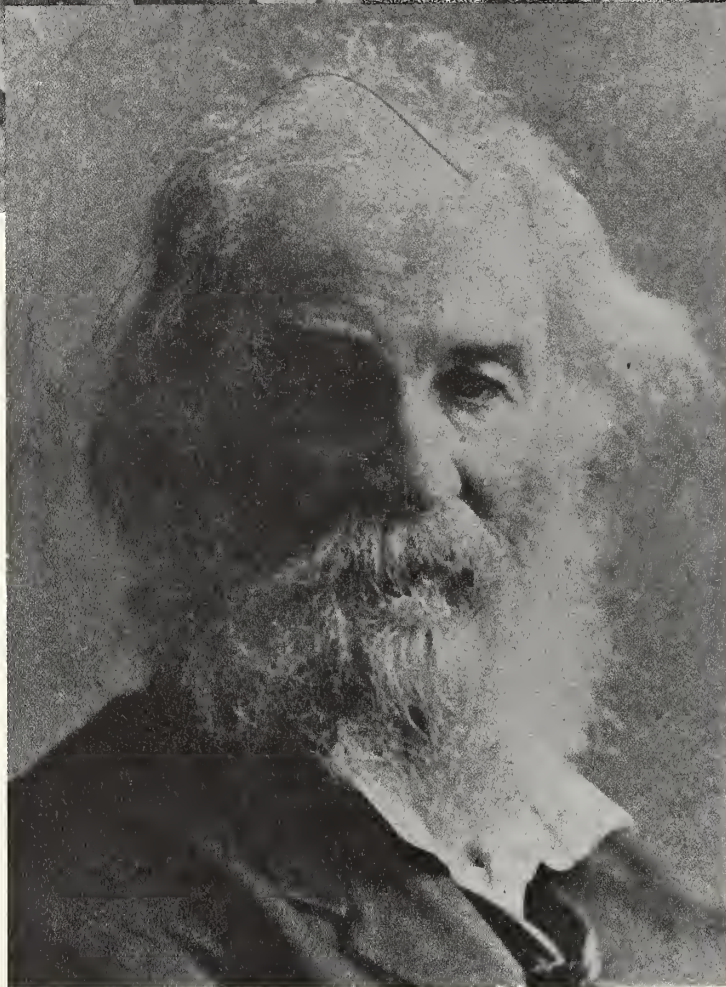
Inspired in part by the success of Albert Beveridge's *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858*



Thomas Jefferson

(1928), Masters argued that "As no new fact of moment about Lincoln can now be brought to light, the time has arrived when his apotheosis can be touched with the hand of rational analysis." Masters's debunking spirit was especially informed by the anti-war spirit which pervaded intellectual circles in America after World War I. Heroic reputations and wars went hand in hand. "War," Masters wrote, "makes brutes of those who practice it, and cowards and sycophants of those who have to endure it against their will; and when thinking is cowed and judgment is shackled, great reputations can be built both by stifling criticism and by artifying the facts."

The portrait of Lincoln that Masters drew was savage. The Rail-splitter was "profoundly ashamed of the poverty of his youth" and, therefore, married for money and leagued himself politically with the privileged classes in the Whig party. Though "mannerless" and "unkempt," Lincoln was no back-slapping common man. He was "cold," and



Walt Whitman

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FIGURES 2, 3, 4. Masters thought that Lincoln's fame unfairly overshadowed the fame of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Jefferson, and Walt Whitman. Lincoln himself thought Jefferson "the most distinguished politician of our history." Emerson thought Lincoln was "the true representative of this continent." Whitman believed that Lincoln was "the grandest figure yet, on all the crowded canvas of the Nineteenth Century." They would not have complained about the distribution of fame as Masters did.

no one called him "Abe." He was also calculating; there simply "was no time when he was not thinking of his career." His mind was "lazy." He never studied and as a result knew little of the history of his country and its institutions. He was a "slick" and "crafty" politician.

Masters relied on Beveridge's recent biography and William H. Herndon's older one for the details to support this hostile portrait of Lincoln's personality. But Herndon and Beveridge wrote little or nothing about Lincoln's Presidency. For his appraisal of that part of Lincoln's life, Masters relied on his own political prejudices. He dedicated the book "*To the Memory of THOMAS JEFFERSON THE PREEMINENT PHILOSOPHER — STATESMAN OF THE UNITED STATES, AND THEIR GREATEST PRESIDENT; WHOSE UNIVERSAL GENIUS THROUGH A LONG LIFE WAS DEVOTED TO THE PEACE, ENLIGHTENMENT AND LIBERTY OF THE UNION CREATED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF 1787.*" Lincoln "was a Hamiltonian always, though his awkwardness and poverty, and somewhat gregarious nature and democratic words seemed to mark him as the son of Jefferson." He centralized power.

Lincoln, Masters argued, could and should have avoided the Civil War. Instead, he ordered the invasion of the South. He was a conqueror. He obliterated states' rights and with them the true republic. In this crusade Lincoln wedded religious cant to centralizing politics ("Hebraic Puritanism," Masters called it) and ushered in the forces of industrial plutocracy, prohibition, and political corruption.

Even for an age used to debunking, Masters went too far. Rupert Hughes had been more circumspect. "As a god," he said, "Washington was a woeful failure; as a man he was tremendous." Masters did not give Lincoln any praise except to say that he had a sense of humor. The result was a howl of indignation all across America. School teachers, Boston booksellers, preachers, and Lincoln admirers denounced the book in dozens of letters to the editor, articles, and sermons. Charles E. Tracewell put it very succinctly in the *Washington Star*: "He overdid it."

Reactions to the book ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous. Lewis Gannett in the New York *Herald Tribune* confessed "to a total disbelief in heroes and a profound conviction of the high virtue of debunking. The conventional mythology according to which all great men were born great and never stole cherries or told fibs encourages small boys to feel guilty if they are not prigs. It is a loathsome philosophy." He quarreled with Masters not because he debunked but because he rebuked. It was "sheer poetry" and "heroic moralizing" but all for the other side. "Mr. Masters too has a spotless hero," Gannett said, "Stephen A. Douglas, and his hordes of angels are the soldiers of the Confederacy." The *Oneida* (New York) *Dispatch* said that "Masters' arguments fall of their own weight, inasmuch as his only declaration in Lincoln's favor is that 'he had a sense of humor.'" Yale's William Lyon Phelps was disgusted. "Never in history," he said, "has literature been so consistently filthy and rotten as today . . . it is getting so a good man is afraid to die." Representative Joe Crail of California, who had not read the book, called it "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy and indecent" and introduced a bill in Congress to ban its circulation through the mail. And the custodian of the Lincoln tomb declared: "I have 300 pictures of Lincoln, taken at various ages after he was 5 years of age, showing him in many poses, and not one even hints that he was 'unkempt.' . . . His clothes were neat, his hair well combed and his features pleasant."

Richard F. Fuller, treasurer of the Board of Trade of Boston Book Merchants and a prominent member of the American Booksellers' Association, wrote a letter to the *Boston Herald* stating that he was glad that *Lincoln: The Man* was not selling well. The *Boston* newspaper speculated that "the craze for biography" was ebbing, but Masters's publisher reported no disappointment with sales in New York. William L. Nevin, president of New York's John Wanamaker department store, refused to place the book on sale. Wanamaker's Philadelphia store did the same.

Masters had a fine reputation as a man of letters, especially as a poet, and Samuel B. Howe of the South Side High School in Newark, New Jersey, found it beyond his "powers of belief that a man like Masters could say the things he is quoted as saying." It was not an angry young man's book. Masters was over sixty when he wrote it, and this fact invited speculation about his motive. Famed Lincoln collector Oliver R. Barrett of Chicago said that Masters "glimpsed over the top of mediocrity" with his *Spoon River Anthology*, "but from the infection of that fatal praise he became too fearless, too painfully

analytical, and too willing to warm over and serve up his earlier successes. His popularity waned, the public turned to newer lights, and now his 'Abraham Lincoln, the Man' appears — a volume of protest." He noted also that Masters called Jefferson, Whitman, and Emerson the greatest Americans from whose fame "the praise that has been bestowed on Lincoln is a robbery." Jefferson was long dead by the time of Lincoln's Presidency, of course, but Emerson and Whitman both praised Lincoln. Officials of the National Lincoln League referred simply to the author's "commercialized baseness."

Thoughtful reviewers ranged widely in their assessments of the book. A writer for the *Hugo* (Oklahoma) *News* read the *New York Times Magazine* review of *Lincoln: The Man* and complimented it:

It was wisely observed by the . . . reviewer that Masters' work is no Confederate biography — that it is a copperhead biography — that it is such a book as a Knight of the Golden Circle would have written. For it is personal. It is spiteful. It is hateful. It is mean. A Confederate writer probably would criticize the principles and policies of the war president, but he certainly would eulogize the kindly personality and charitable spirit of Lincoln. And it may be observed that in no other section of the country is the Lincoln name attaining such stature right now as it is attaining at the south. The revelatory works of Claude Bowers and Striker and George Fort Milton are teaching southerners how terrible a loss they suffered when Lincoln was killed and his peace-making policies were repudiated by political radicals. Most southerners now believe that if Lincoln had lived, he would have been more successful than Andrew Johnson in his efforts to prevent the onrush of the reconstruction terror.

This astute writer put his finger on a principal reason why Masters found almost no allies at all in his attack on Lincoln. Several editorials from former Confederate states, though they showed no special interest in defending Lincoln, did link him with Andrew Johnson and the (then) new view that Johnson tried to follow Lincoln's mild Reconstruction policies and to fend off a Radical Republican conspiracy to rape the South. The reviewer's assessment of opinion in the South was accurate. Times had changed since 1865.

Few wasted any kind words on Masters's effort. Professional cynic H. L. Mencken, whose review in the New York *Herald Tribune* was widely quoted and attacked, praised the book. Mencken agreed that "Lincoln turned his back on the Jacksonian tradition and allowed himself to be carried out by the tide that was eventually to wash away the old Republic altogether and leave in its place a plutocratic oligarchy hard to distinguish from the Roman." Lincoln's "most memorable feat," Mencken wrote, "was his appointment of the Lord God Jehova to the honorary chairmanship of the Republican National Committee." The Bill of Rights, Mencken added, "has never recovered" from Lincoln's repressive administration.

Claude Bowers, newspaperman-turned-historian and an active Democrat, called the book "intensely interesting" and "challenging." Harry Elmer Barnes thought the book might "compel the devotees of the Lincoln cult to listen to reason, something which they have not done in our generation." Barnes had argued "at the very progressive Twentieth Century Club in Boston" that Lincoln was unpopular in his own day; Barnes only "narrowly escaped physical assault at the hands of an Anglican Bishop who was present." Masters "rendered a genuine constructive service" by establishing "the precedent for fearless investigation of the career of the Great Emancipator." The *Syracuse* (New York) *Standard* interviewed faculty members at the local university, one of whom, history professor Edwin P. Tanner, also thought "Masters . . . rendered us a real service." Historian H. G. Eckenrode praised the book as "an exceedingly powerful and convincing work."

Most thoughtful critics — like Louis A. Warren in *Lincoln Lore*; Paul Angle, then the Secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association; and historian Claude M. Fuess — dismissed the book because it was less a history than an indictment. Masters had been a lawyer as well as a poet, and he argued a case against Lincoln as though he were fighting for a client's life. Fuess noted the excesses of Masters's language. The principles of the Whig party "were plunder and nothing else." The Republican party was "conceived in hatred and mothered in hatred, and went forth from a diseased womb without a name." Lincoln's record in Congress was "a tracing of his wavering mind, his incoherent thinking." He was "an under-sexed man." His nomination at Chicago was the result of

"brutality and cunning." His attitude toward the South was one "of hidden and deep malignancy." Warren noted that the author was consumed by three passions. He hated the Christian religion; he hated "modern Americanism, and especially the political party now in power [Republicans]"; and he hated most American heroes. Angle noted the paradoxes of Masters's hatreds:

An advocate of slavery as a social system, he criticizes Lincoln for not opposing its existence in the South. An opponent of capitalism, he lauds Douglas as a statesman of the industrial era. A scathing critic of those who would pass moral judgments, there is hardly a page in his book on which he has failed to condemn or justify.

Lincoln: The Man, then, was a personal book, more interesting for what it revealed about Masters than for what it said about Lincoln. Reporters in New York City were able to interview the author, and the newspaper reports of these interviews were revealing. Earl Sparling of the New York *Telegram* described Masters as sitting in the office of his publisher, "his mouth a grim, austere slit, only his battered hat to show him a poet." The poet said that "we have a Christian republic; no slavery, no polygamy, no saloons; only monopolists, bureaucrats, corrupt courts, imbecile Senators obeying Wall Street, fanatics, clergymen." The Emancipation Proclamation, calculated to make Lincoln famous, was "in the direction of inspiring Negroes to rise and kill the white people." To a New York *Times* reporter, Masters protested that he was "not an iconoclast." A reporter for the *Herald Tribune* visited Masters in his home on West Twenty-Third Street. If Lincoln had let the states go in peace, Masters told the reporter, "They would have come back into the Union in less than five years. Economic necessity would have forced them back."

Nearly fifty years later, what can be said about Edgar Lee Masters and the controversy over *Lincoln: The Man*? First, though he railed against Wall Street, monopoly, and war, Masters's radicalism was largely cultural rather than political. Masters said that he hated prohibition "worse than anything since abolition." He was still fighting the small-town Republican prohibitionists his father fought back in Lewistown. His political and social criticism was neither profound nor well thought out. It had a veneer of sophistication because of his penchant for constitutional debate, a heritage of his legal background. Though critics dwelled on his Democratic affiliation, his denunciation of Lincoln's centralizing power would not endear him to the Democratic party of the 1930s.

Second, Masters's values boiled down to a peculiar nostalgia for the small-town America against which he first rebelled in the *Spoon River Anthology*. He believed in a "storybook democracy," to borrow a phrase from another contemporary novelist and social critic, John Dos Passos. Much of the content of this nostalgia was essentially racist. One suspects that the Civil War seemed hardly worth fighting to him because he could not see any wisdom in shedding white men's blood for the sake of slaves. He wrote a poem entitled "The Great Race Passes," which borrowed its key phrase from Madison Grant's famous racist book, *The Passing of the Great Race*. He loathed immigrants, felt that Civil War casualties had depleted the racial stock of America's "better days," and was antisemitic. Masters hated "Hebraic Puritanism" in part because he saw Christianity as perpetuating some of the religious ideas of Judaism. He once blamed the Civil War on a Jewish lust for money. He thought that Jews had spoiled the poetic talent of Vachel Lindsay; Jewish critics in New York shaped American opinion of poetry written in Chicago.

Third, Masters altogether misjudged the spirit of his age. When *Lincoln: The Man* appeared, critic after critic immediately labeled it as just another debunking book in the Rupert Hughes tradition. Instead of riding the crest of a wave, Masters in fact sank in a sea of predictable cynicism. The Philadelphia *Inquirer* placed the book in the "new school of biography in this country" and attacked the evolution of this school:

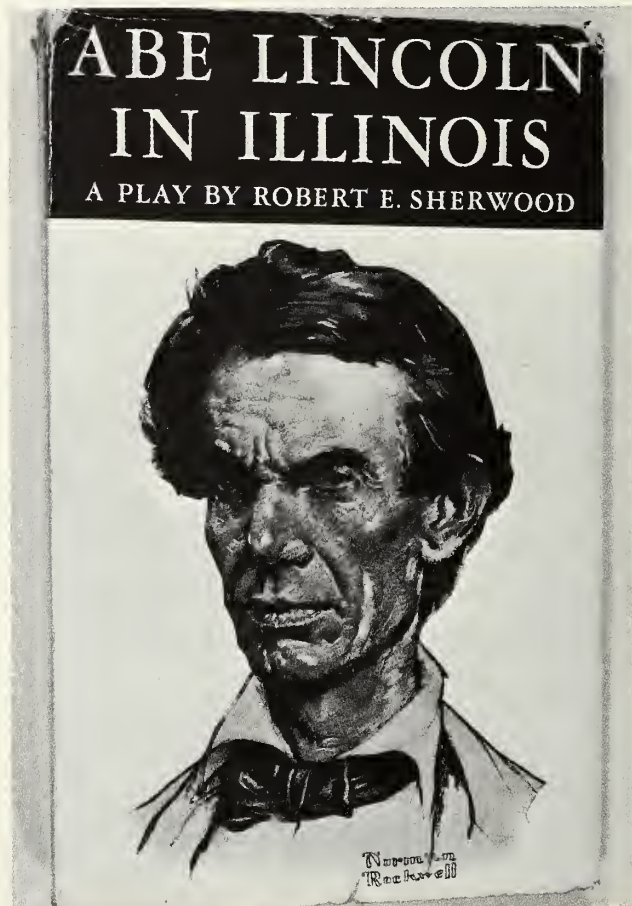
The original series of "real" biographies which were given to the public many years ago were entertaining and valuable because they made an honest attempt to depict notable men and women as they actually existed. But in these jazz days biographers are not content with giving distorted pictures of their subjects; they also take joy in attacking their motives.

More than one reviewer had ready at hand this anecdote to scotch the debunking spirit:

Two or three years ago another American writer made a speech about George Washington in which he said things resented by the people, who revered the memory of the Father of His Country. The day after the speech was made the Washington correspondents asked President Coolidge what he thought about the things that had been said.

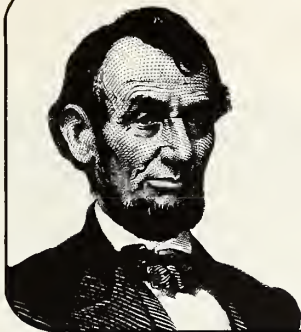
Coolidge turned, looked out of the window toward the towering Washington monument, and said: "I notice it is still up there."

Masters's book was the last gasp of the debunking spirit in America between the wars. The popular Lincoln books and plays of the Depression era praised Lincoln. Robert Sherwood's play, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, and Carl Sandburg's mammoth biography are the obvious examples. Predictions that Masters's "Copperhead" biography would not put a dent in Lincoln's reputation proved true. The book is largely forgotten. Stephen Oates, whose recent biography (*With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln*) stresses that no one called Lincoln "Abe," does not mention Masters's book. Even Masters himself by 1944 could write an article on "Abe Lincoln's New Salem" which called "Lincoln's career . . . more magical, more dramatic, than Washington's or Jackson's." He wrote the article for a magazine he would surely have shunned in 1931, *The Rotarian*!



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 5. Robert E. Sherwood's play, published as a book in 1939, won a Pulitzer Prize and launched Raymond Massey's career as a portrayer of Lincoln on stage and screen. The illustration on the dust jacket resembles Massey more than Lincoln and shows how much the success of the play depended on the actor in Lincoln's role. The legalistic and pro-Southern Masters surely disliked Lincoln's speech in the play in which he denounced the Supreme Court as an institution "composed of mortal men, most of whom, . . . come from the privileged class in the South."



Lincoln Lore

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Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
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LINCOLN AND SLAVERY: AN OVERVIEW

Abraham Lincoln was a native of a slave state, Kentucky. In 1811 Hardin County, where Lincoln was born two years before, contained 1,007 slaves and 1,627 white males above the age of sixteen. His father's brother Mordecai owned a slave. His father's Uncle Isaac may have owned over forty slaves. The Richard Berry family, with whom Lincoln's mother Nancy Hanks lived before her marriage to Thomas Lincoln, owned slaves. Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, however, were members of a Baptist congregation which had separated from another church because of opposition to slavery. This helps explain Lincoln's statement in 1864 that he was "naturally anti-slavery" and could "not remember when I did not so think, and feel." In 1860 he claimed that his father left Kentucky for Indiana's free soil "partly on account of slavery."

Nothing in Lincoln's political career is inconsistent with his claim to have been "naturally anti-slavery." In 1836, when resolutions came before the Illinois House condemning abolitionism, declaring that the Constitution sanctified the right of property in slaves, and denying the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, Lincoln was one of six to vote against them (seventy-seven voted in favor). Near the end of the term, March 3, 1837, Lincoln and fellow Whig Dan Stone wrote a protest against the resolutions which stated that "the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy." It too denounced abolitionism as more likely to exacerbate than abate the evils of slavery and asserted the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia (though the right should not be exercised without the consent of the District's citizens). Congress, of course, had no right to interfere with slavery in the states. In 1860 Lincoln could honestly point to the consistency of his antislavery convictions over the last twenty-three years. That early protest "briefly defined his position on the slavery question; and so far as it goes, it was then the same that it is now."

In his early political career in the 1830s and 1840s, Lincoln had faith in the benign operation of American political institutions. Though "opposed to slavery" throughout the period,

he "rested in the hope and belief that it was in course of ultimate extinction." For that reason, it was only "a minor question" to him. For the sake of keeping the nation together, Lincoln thought it "a paramount duty" to leave slavery in the states alone. He never spelled out the basis of his faith entirely, but he had confidence that the country was ever seeking to approximate the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. All men would be free when slavery, restricted to the areas where it already existed, exhausted the soil, became unprofitable, and was abolished by the slave-holding states themselves or perhaps by numerous individual emancipations. Reaching this goal, perhaps by the end of the century, required of dutiful politicians only "that we should never knowingly lend ourselves directly or indirectly, to prevent . . . slavery from dying a natural death — to find new places for it to live in, when it can no longer exist in the old." This statement, made in 1845, expressed Lincoln's lack of

concern over the annexation of Texas, where slavery already existed. As a Congressman during the Mexican War, Lincoln supported the Wilmot Proviso because it would prevent the growth of slavery in parts of the Mexican cession where the institution did not already exist. He still considered slavery a "distracting" question, one that might destroy America's experiment in popular government if politicians were to "enlarge and aggravate" it either by seeking to expand slavery or to attack it in the states.

Lincoln became increasingly worried around 1850 when he read John C. Calhoun's denunciations of the Declaration of Independence. When he read a similar denunciation by a Virginia clergyman, he grew more upset. Such things undermined his confidence because they showed that some Americans did not wish to approach the ideals of the Declaration of Independence; for some, they were no longer ideals at all. But these were the statements of a society directly interested in the preservation of the institution, and Lincoln did not become enough alarmed to aggravate the slave question. He began even to lose interest in politics.

The passage of Stephen A. Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. Like many other prints of Lincoln published soon after his death, this one celebrated the Emancipation Proclamation as his greatest act.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Charles Eberstadt noted fifty-two printed editions of the Emancipation Proclamation issued between 1862 and 1865. He called this one a "highly spirited Western edition embellished with four large slave scenes lithographed at the left and four freedom scenes at the right."

in 1854 changed all this. Lincoln was startled when territory previously closed to slavery was opened to the possibility of its introduction by local vote. He was especially alarmed at the fact that this change was led by a Northerner with no direct interest in slavery to protect.

In 1841 Lincoln had seen a group of slaves on a steamboat being sold South from Kentucky to a harsher (so he assumed) slavery. Immediately after the trip, he noted the irony of their seeming contentment with their lot. They had appeared to be the happiest people on board. After the Kansas-Nebraska Act, he wrote about the same episode, still vivid to him, as "a continual torment to me." Slavery, he said, "has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable."

Lincoln repeatedly stated that slaveholders were no worse than Northerners would be in the same situation. Having inherited an undesirable but socially explosive political institution, Southerners made the best of a bad situation. Like all Americans before the Revolution, they had denounced Great Britain's forcing slavery on the colonies with the slave trade, and, even in the 1850s, they admitted the humanity of the Negro by despising those Southerners who dealt with the Negro as property, pure and simple — slave traders. But he feared that the ability of Northerners to see that slavery was morally wrong was in decline. This, almost as surely as disunion, could mean the end of the American experiment in freedom, for any argument for slavery which ignored the moral wrong of the institution could be used to enslave any man, white or black. If lighter men were to enslave darker men, then "you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own." If superior intellect determined masters, then "you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with an intellect superior to your own." Once the moral distinction between slavery and freedom were forgotten, nothing could stop its spread. It was "founded in the selfishness of man's nature," and that selfishness could overcome any barriers of climate or geography.

By 1856 Lincoln was convinced that the "sentiment in favor of white slavery . . . prevailed in all the slave state papers, except those of Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri and Maryland." The people of the South had "an immediate palpable and immensely great pecuniary interest" in the question; "while, with the people of the North, it is merely an abstract question of moral right." Unfortunately, the latter formed a looser bond than economic self-interest in two billion dollars worth of slaves. And the Northern ability to resist was steadily undermined by the moral indifference to slavery epitomized by Douglas's willingness to see slavery voted up or down in the territories. The Dred Scott decision in 1857 convinced Lincoln that the Kansas-Nebraska Act had been the beginning of a conspiracy to make slavery perpetual, national, and universal. His House-Divided Speech of 1858 and his famous debates with Douglas stressed the specter of a conspiracy to nationalize slavery.

Lincoln's claims in behalf of the slaves were modest and did not make much of the Negro's abilities outside of slavery. The Negro "is not my equal . . . in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment," Lincoln said, but "in the right to put into his mouth the bread that his own hands have earned, he is the equal of every other man, white or black." Lincoln objected to slavery primarily because it violated the doctrine of the equality of all men announced in the Declaration of Independence. "As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a *master*," Lincoln said. "This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."

Lincoln had always worked on the assumption that the Union was more important than abolishing slavery. As long as the country was approaching the ideal of freedom for all men, even if it took a hundred years, it made no sense to destroy the freest country in the world. When it became apparent to Lincoln that the country might not be approaching that ideal, it somewhat confused his thinking. In 1854 he admitted that as "Much as I hate slavery, I would consent to the extension of it rather than see the Union dissolved, just as I would consent to any GREAT evil, to avoid a GREATER one." As his fears of a conspiracy to nationalize

slavery increased, he ceased to make such statements. In the secession crisis he edged closer toward making liberty more important than Union. In New York City on February 20, 1861, President-elect Lincoln said:

There is nothing that can ever bring me willingly to consent to the destruction of this Union, under which . . . the whole country has acquired its greatness, unless it were to be that thing for which the Union itself was made. I understand a ship to be made for the carrying and preservation of the cargo, and so long as the ship can be saved, with the cargo, it should never be abandoned. This Union should likewise never be abandoned unless it fails and the probability of its preservation shall cease to exist without throwing the passengers and cargo overboard. So long, then, as it is possible that the prosperity and the liberties of the people can be preserved in the Union, it shall be my purpose at all times to preserve it.

The Civil War saw Lincoln move quickly to save the Union by stretching and, occasionally, violating the Constitution. Since he had always said that constitutional scruple kept him from bothering slavery in the states, it is clear that early in the war he was willing to go much farther to save the Union than he was willing to go to abolish slavery. Yet he interpreted it as his constitutional duty to save the Union, even if to do so he had to violate some small part of that very Constitution. There certainly was no constitutional duty to do anything about slavery. For over a year, he did not.

On August 22, 1862, Lincoln responded to criticism from Horace Greeley by stating his slavery policy:

If there be those who would not save the Union, unless they could at the same time *save* slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time *destroy* slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do *less* whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do *more* whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors; and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of *official* duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed *personal* wish that all men every where could be free.

The Emancipation Proclamation, announced just one month later, was avowedly a military act, and Lincoln boasted of his consistency almost two years later by saying, "I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery."

Nevertheless, he had changed his mind in some regards. Precisely one year before he issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln had criticized General John C. Frémont's emancipation proclamation for Missouri by saying that "as to . . . the liberation of slaves" it was "*purely political*, and not within the range of *military* law, or necessity."

If a commanding General finds a necessity to seize the farm of a private owner, for a pasture, an encampment, or a fortification, he has the right to do so, and to so hold it, as long as the necessity lasts; and this is within military law, because within military necessity. But to say the farm shall no longer belong to the owner, or his heirs forever; and this as well when the farm is not needed for military purposes as when it is, is purely political, without the savor of military law about it. And the same is true of slaves. If the General needs them, he can seize them, and use them; but when the need is past, it is not for him to fix their permanent future

condition. That must be settled according to laws made by law-makers, and not by military proclamations. The proclamation in the point in question, is simply "dictatorship." It assumes that the general may do *anything* he pleases—confiscate the lands and free the slaves of *loyal* people, as well as of disloyal ones. And going the whole figure I have no doubt would be more popular with some thoughtless people, than that which has been done! But I cannot assume this reckless position; nor allow others to assume it on my responsibility. You speak of it as being the only means of *saving* the government. On the contrary it is itself the surrender of the government. Can it be pretended that it is any longer the government of the U.S. — any government of Constitution and laws, — wherein a General, or a President, may make permanent rules of property by proclamation?

I do not say Congress might not with propriety pass a law, on the point, just such as General Fremont proclaimed. I do not say I might not, as a member of Congress, vote for it. What I object to, is, that I as President, shall expressly or impliedly seize and exercise the permanent legislative functions of the government.

Critics called this inconsistency; Lincoln's admirers have called it "growth." Whatever the case, just as Lincoln's love of Union caused him to handle the Constitution somewhat roughly, so his hatred of slavery led him, more slowly, to treat the Constitution in a manner inconceivable to him in 1861. Emancipation, if somewhat more slowly, was allowed about the same degree of constitutional latitude the Union earned in Lincoln's policies.

The destruction of slavery never became the avowed object of the war, but by insisting on its importance, militarily, to saving the Union, Lincoln made it constitutionally beyond criticism and, in all that really mattered, an aim of the war. In all practical applications, it was a condition of peace — and was so announced in the Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction of December 8, 1863, and repeatedly defended in administration statements thereafter. He reinforced this fusion of aims by insisting that the Confederacy was an attempt to establish "a new Nation, . . . with the primary, and fundamental object to maintain, enlarge, and perpetuate human slavery," thus making the enemy and slavery one and the same.

Only once did Lincoln apparently change his mind. In the desperately gloomy August of 1864, when defeat for the administration seemed certain, Lincoln bowed to pressure from Henry J. Raymond long enough to draft a letter empowering Raymond to propose peace with Jefferson Davis on the condition of reunion alone, all other questions (including slavery, of course) to be settled by a convention

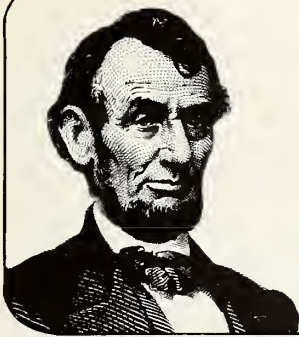
afterwards. Lincoln never finished the letter, and the offer was never made. Moreover, as things looked in August, Lincoln was surrendering only what he could not keep anyway. He was so convinced that the Democratic platform would mean the loss of the Union, that he vowed in secret to work to save the Union before the next President came into office in March. He could hope for some cooperation from Democrats in this, as they professed to be as much in favor of Union as the Republicans. Without the Union, slavery could not be abolished anyhow, and the Democrats were committed to restoring slavery.

Lincoln had made abolition a party goal in 1864 by making support for the Thirteenth Amendment a part of the Republican platform. The work he performed for that measure after his election proved that his antislavery views had not abated. Near the end of his life, he repeated in a public speech one of his favorite arguments against slavery: "Whenever [I] hear any one, arguing for slavery I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."



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Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 3. This Indianapolis edition of the Emancipation Proclamation, published in 1866, obviously copied the edition in Figure 2. Note, however, that the harsher scenes of slavery are removed — a sign of the post-Reconstruction political ethos.



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Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
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Number 1706

BROWNING'S PECULIAR TURN TO THE RIGHT

Those who keep diaries often influence the writing of history far more than they influenced events in their own day. Gideon Welles occupied a position in Lincoln's Cabinet inferior to William H. Seward's and Edwin M. Stanton's, but his sourly independent diary wrecked the reputations of dozens of Washington politicians. One reason the Radical Republicans have fared so poorly in historical writing is that most of the prominent diarists around Lincoln hated them. Welles, John Hay, and Edward Bates saw them as "Jacobins," but there is little evidence that the President saw the Radicals the same way. Salmon P. Chase, whose diary might have balanced the picture over the years, never had the influence on historical writing that the conservatives had, because he did not as clearly admire Lincoln as they did. Criticizing Abraham Lincoln has never been a good way to gain the trust of historians.

The other great diarist near the Lincoln administration, Orville Hickman Browning, was also a Radical-hater. His erratic and ultimately inexplicable political course during the Civil War reveals the danger in relying too heavily on diaries, which may reflect peculiar political positions.

Browning was never much of a "Lincoln man." He had hoped that Edward Bates would be the Republican nominee for President in 1860. However, the Illinois delegation, of which Browning was a member, was pledged to Lincoln, and Browning worked for Lincoln's nomination at the convention. Even after the nomination, Browning thought that "we have made a mistake in the selection of candidates." His assistance in getting Bates to support the Republican ticket proved vital, but Browning had little luck in recommending Cabinet appointments. He wanted to see Bates become Secretary of State and Joseph Holt, Secretary of War. Browning's was one of many voices raised against Norman B. Judd's inclusion in Lincoln's official family.

Browning exercised his greatest influence on the Lincoln

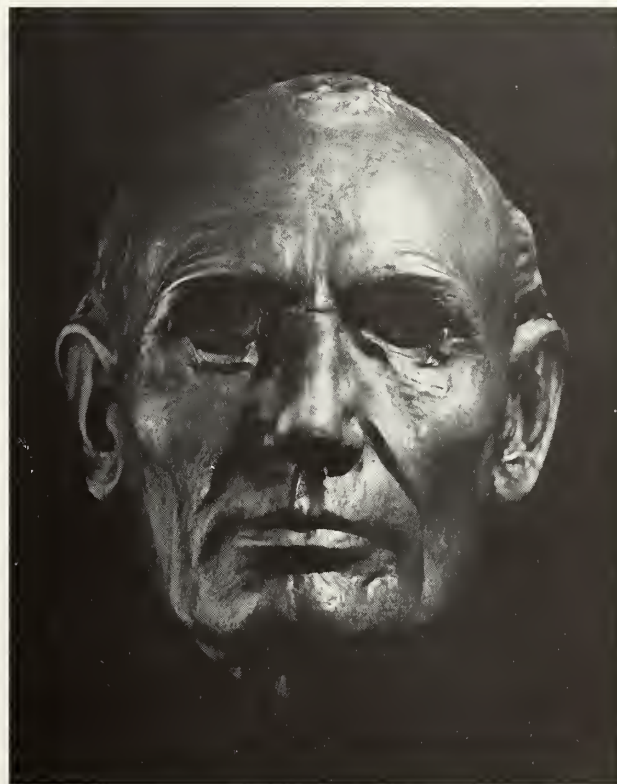
administration when he read a draft of the First Inaugural Address and suggested removing a provocative threat to "reclaim the public property and places which have fallen" in the seceded states. Browning's reasoning has often been taken as Lincoln's. He admitted that Lincoln's draft was right in principle without altering the threat to "reclaim" federal property, but, Browning explained,

In any conflict which may ensue between the government and the seceding States, it is very important that the traitors shall be the aggressors, and that they are kept constantly and palpably in the wrong.

The first attempt that is made to furnish supplies or reinforcements to Sumter will induce aggression by South Carolina, and then the government will stand justified, before the entire country, in repelling that aggression, and retaking the forts.

After Fort Sumter fell, Browning imputed his own reasoning to Lincoln. "Upon looking into the laws," he told the President on April 18, "which clothe you with power to act in this emergency, I am not sure that you expected, or desired any other result."

Browning was a conservative by nature, but war brought out a radical streak in him. If Baltimore stood in the way of troops coming to protect Washington, he told Lincoln, it should be "laid in ruin." Before April was over, he thought it likely that slaves would flock to the Union armies and inevitably "rise in rebellion." "The time is not yet," he added, "but it will come when it will be necessary for you to march an army into the South, and proclaim freedom to the slaves." Browning celebrated General John C. Frémont's proclamation freeing the slaves of rebels in Missouri in the late summer of 1861, and he thought the President wrong to revoke it. Frémont's proclamation did "not deal with citizens at all," Browning remonstrated, "but with public enemies." Citing precedents in international law, he insisted that war abolished society and



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 1. Browning recalled that sculptor Leonard W. Volk had worked in a marble yard in Quincy, Illinois, Browning's home. Lincoln's friend thought Volk's bust of Stephen A. Douglas "decidedly a work of genius." Volk is better known for his famous life mask of Lincoln. Dr. O. Gerald Trigg allowed the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum to photograph his superb bronze casting of the mask with the striking result above. For more information on the mask and on Volk's famous castings of Lincoln's hands, turn to the second article in this issue of *Lincoln Lore*.

gave "liberty to use violence *in infinitum*." "All their property," Browning said, "is subject to be . . . confiscated, and disposed of absolutely and forever by the belligerent power, without any reference whatever to the laws of society." Lincoln disagreed sharply.

After the death of Senator Stephen A. Douglas in June of 1861, Governor Richard Yates appointed Browning to finish his term. In the Senate, Browning defended the administration's arbitrary arrests and voted for the First Confiscation Act. He voted to emancipate slaves in the District of Columbia.

After April of 1862, Browning turned suddenly to the right. He opposed the Second Confiscation Act and urged Lincoln to veto it. It was a test "whether he [Lincoln] was to control the abolitionists and Radicals or whether they were to control him." He praised Lincoln's letter in answer to Horace Greeley's "Prayer of Twenty Millions" for emancipation, and he bitterly opposed the Emancipation Proclamation that fall. Browning was campaigning for Congressional candidates in Illinois when he heard it had been issued, and he practically stopped in his tracks. He slowed down his campaigning, and he twice pleaded with Lincoln to alter the Proclamation.

There is no explanation for the suddenness of Browning's change. In principle the Emancipation Proclamation was little different from Frémont's proclamation, and Browning had quarreled with Lincoln for revoking that. Lincoln's assault on slavery seemed to be legitimate by the very precedents in international law which Browning had called to Lincoln's attention. The Illinois Senator was disappointed that the President had not appointed him to the United States Supreme Court. He wanted the job so badly that he wrote Lincoln a somewhat embarrassed letter asking for it outright, admitting that it was "an office peculiarly adapted to my tastes." By the spring of 1862, Lincoln still had not filled the position, and many thought Browning was still in the running. Lincoln did not decide to appoint David Davis until July, and Browning had already turned to the right by that time.

Politically, Browning became increasingly disaffected from the administration. There was much doubt by 1864 that he would support Lincoln's reelection. Browning told a friend in September that he had "never . . . been able to persuade myself that he [Lincoln] was big enough for his position." No one knows how he voted in November. Browning's Civil War politics are an enigma to this day.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 2. Orville Hickman Browning remained personally friendly to Lincoln even after their political disagreements. Gustave Koerner, a fellow Illinois Republican, always remembered Browning's "conspicuous . . . ruffled shirt and large cuffs." Their relations were pleasant enough, but Koerner would "have liked him better if he had been a little less conscious of his own superiority."

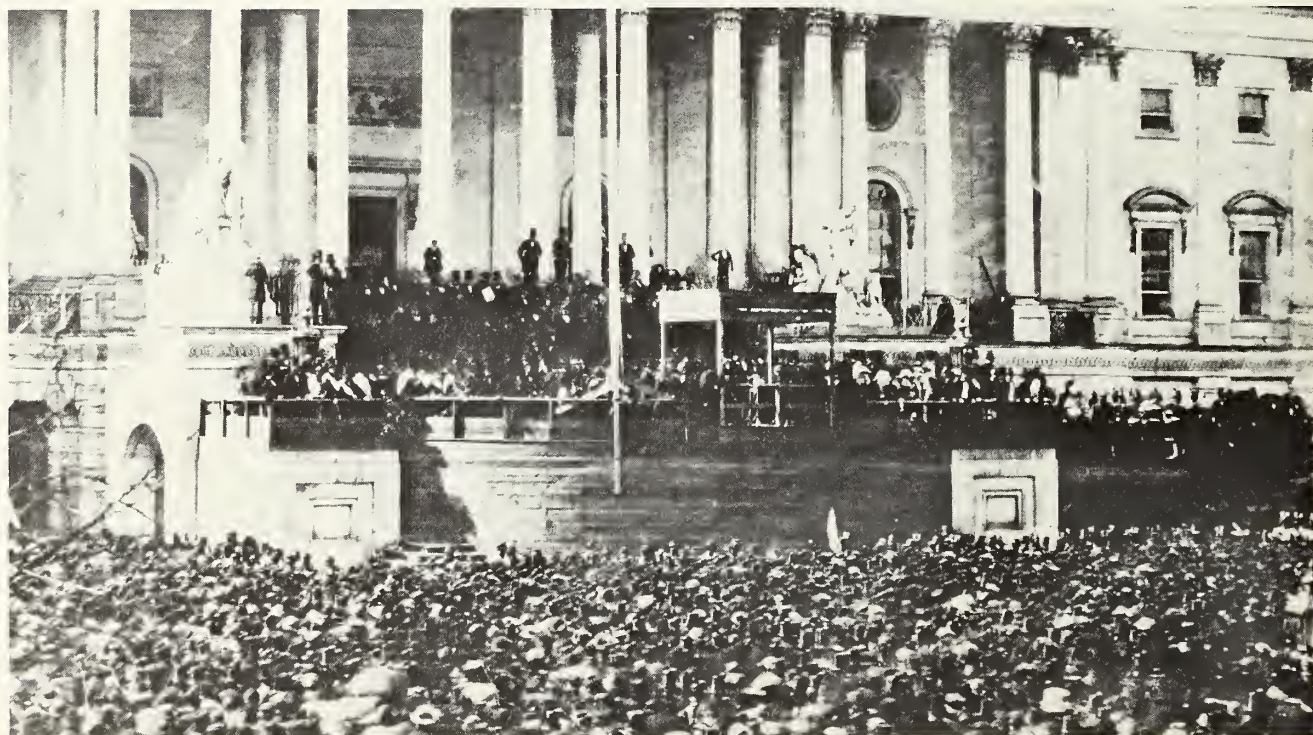
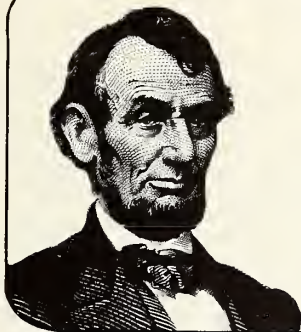


FIGURE 3. Lincoln's first inauguration.

From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum



Lincoln Lore

May, 1980

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor.
Mary Jane Hubler, Editorial Assistant. Published each month by the
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Number 1707

A Progressive Admiration: Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln

The Progressive Era was a great period for American historical writing. The two most learned Presidents since Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, occupied the White House in this age of reform. Both men were historians. The historical discipline was becoming more professionalized every day. With the deaths of the contemporary writers who knew Abraham Lincoln personally — William H. Herndon, Ward Hill Lamon, Isaac N. Arnold, John G. Nicolay, and John Hay — Lincoln scholarship was becoming more critical and objective. One of the masterpieces of Lincoln literature, Lord Charnwood's biography, appeared near the end of the era. A Republican and Progressive, Albert J. Beveridge, would soon bring writing on Lincoln into the mainstream of professional historical scholarship.

The greatest spur to the study of Lincoln in this period was the celebration of the centennial of his birth in 1909. To this factor, one must surely add Theodore Roosevelt's interest in the life of the Sixteenth President. It was a lifelong interest inherited from his father. Although Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., had married into a Georgia slaveholding family, he was an ardent Republican. He apparently met the President and Mrs. Lincoln while he was in Washington in 1862, working to establish a system whereby allotments for soldiers' families could be deducted from their pay before all the money went into the hands of corrupt sutlers and liquor peddlers. The elder Roosevelt served on the United States Allotment Commission in New York and performed considerable work for the common soldiers and their families. He knew Nicolay and Hay well.

Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., though a young man during the Civil War, chose to hire a substitute for his army service rather than to enlist. Some have speculated that his son later exhibited great zeal for combat out of embarrassment at his father's course during the war. The father certainly influenced the son in more direct ways. From his father, the future President gained an admiration for the Republican

party, a penchant for trying to help the common man, and a keen interest in Abraham Lincoln.

Roosevelt's view of Lincoln changed with time. Before the turn of the century, his admiration of the Sixteenth President was conventional for a budding Republican politician with a sense of history. Roosevelt considered slavery "a grossly anachronistic and un-American form of evil," and he naturally admired the man who ended it. He hated "the professional Abolitionists." They were the sort of people who always agitated about something and, in the case of slavery, they happened for once to be correct. Roosevelt thought that the ultimate extinction of slavery had been a certainty, but it might have taken another hundred years without the Civil War. In sum, he liked Lincoln's moderation.

Around the time of the Spanish-American War, when Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary of the Navy, he had a

rather special interpretation of Lincoln's life. "I feel that in this age we do well to remember," Roosevelt told the Republican Club of New York on Lincoln's Birthday in 1898, "... that Abraham Lincoln, who prized the material prosperity of his country so much, prized her honor even more, that he was willing to jeopardize for a moment the material welfare of our citizens that in the long run her honor might be established." A jingoist critique of men who valued the stock market more than the national honor followed and was aimed at the many businessmen who had little enthusiasm for American imperialism.

Early in Roosevelt's career, Lincoln appears to have been his second choice among historical heroes. George Washington was, "not even excepting Lincoln, the very greatest man of modern times," Roosevelt told Henry Cabot Lodge in 1884. Almost a decade later, he was still describing Washington as the "greatest of Americans" and an exemplar of the sort of national greatness forged by "feats of hardihood, of daring, and of bodily prowess." Hunting in his youth had made Washington a great man.

Later in his life, Roosevelt was careful to link the two



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FIGURE 1. Theodore Roosevelt.

men's names in public utterances. He referred always to "the two greatest statesmen this country has ever had." He never said publicly that he preferred the one or the other. Like his friend Henry Cabot Lodge, Roosevelt was also a great admirer of Alexander Hamilton, but Hamilton was far too anti-democratic in political sentiment to be very quotable by an active politician. Roosevelt, however, professed to see a lot of Hamiltonian Federalism in Lincoln:

He [Lincoln] seized — half unwittingly — all that was best and wisest in the tradition of Federalism; he was the true successor of the Federalist leaders; but he grafted on their system a profound belief that the great heart of the nation beat for truth, honor, and liberty.

Roosevelt despised Thomas Jefferson. He thought "the worship of Jefferson a discredit" to his country, and the more he studied Jefferson, the more profoundly he distrusted him. He was "the most incapable executive that ever filled the presidential chair," but he "did thoroughly believe in the people, just as Abraham Lincoln did." For a man who detested Jefferson, Lincoln was a crucial link to America's liberal tradition. The more liberal and reform-minded Roosevelt grew, the more interested he became in Lincoln. Neither the conservative Hamilton nor the bland Washington could supply that vital impulse.

As early as 1885, Roosevelt criticized a Supreme Court decision which favored conservative interests by referring to Lincoln's critique of the Dred Scott decision. Most often, however, it was Lincoln's practicality and moderation which appealed to Roosevelt. In 1900 he told a correspondent that, even though Lincoln was one of the two greatest Americans, he had made mistakes. Appointing Simon Cameron as Secretary of War and making General Ambrose E. Burnside commander of the Army of the Potomac were big mistakes, but Lincoln had to work with the materials at hand to achieve his goals. He could not, for example, accomplish anything by ignoring Cameron's influence in Pennsylvania. "If Lincoln had not consistently combined the ideal and the practicable," Roosevelt concluded, "the war for the union would have failed, and we would now be split in half a dozen confederacies."

When, as President of the United States, Roosevelt faced a serious anthracite coal strike in 1902, he recalled reading Nicolay and Hay's history of the Lincoln administration and took inspiration from their depiction of the Sixteenth President as a resolute man badgered by contradictory advice from extremists on both sides. What Roosevelt liked best about Lincoln in this period of his life was his strong conception of the Presidential office. Roosevelt had "a definite philosophy about the Presidency," he told Henry Cabot Lodge in 1908. "I think it should be a very powerful office, and I think the President should be a very strong man who uses without hesitation every power that the position yields." In fact, he called this the "Jackson-Lincoln theory of the presidency," and he contrasted it with "the Buchanan principle of striving to find some constitutional reason for inaction." As he neared the end of his second term in 1908, Roosevelt pointed to Washington and Lincoln as strong Presidents who acted in a disinterested way as the people's Presidents. He still mentioned Washington with Lincoln, but Lincoln was the really important figure in justifying Roosevelt's active conception of the Presidency. He had said years earlier that Lincoln "was the first who showed how a strong people might have a strong government and yet remain the freest on earth."

William Howard Taft was Roosevelt's handpicked successor, but his conception of the Presidential office was far different from Roosevelt's. The restless ex-President quickly moved into sharp opposition to Taft's brand of Republicanism. Roosevelt's view of Lincoln moved with him steadily to the left. At Ossawatimie, Kansas, in 1910, Roosevelt declared that property should be the servant and

not the master of America, and he legitimized his radical doctrine by quoting from Lincoln's first annual message to Congress:

Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration.

At the Lincoln birthday banquet of the Republican Club of New York in 1911, Roosevelt spoke on "Abraham Lincoln and Progressive Democracy." He was no longer celebrating the moderate President Lincoln, who had mediated between the extremists during the Civil War. Now he hailed Lincoln for meeting "the problems of the present, not by refusing to use other methods than those that had solved the problems of the past, but by using the new methods necessary in order that the old principles could be applied to the new needs." This progressivism, Roosevelt insisted, made Lincoln "the real heir of George Washington."

Roosevelt still could not muster any enthusiasm for Thomas Jefferson, who inspired other liberal reformers in this era.

The founders of our Government, the men who made the Constitution and who signed the Declaration of Independence, tended to divide into two groups, those under Hamilton, who believed in a strong and efficient government, but who distrusted the people; and those under Jefferson, who did not believe in a strong or efficient government, but who in a certain sense did trust the people — although it was really distrust of them to keep the government weak. And therefore for decades we oscillated between the two tendencies, and could not develop the genuine strength that a democracy should have until Abraham Lincoln arose, until he and the men with him founded the Republican party on the union of the two ideas of combining efficient governmental force with genuine and whole-hearted trust in the people.

Roosevelt supported increasingly liberal reform ideas, including the recall of judicial decisions. In criticizing the Supreme Court, the ex-President invoked Lincoln's denunciation of the Supreme Court of Roger B. Taney and the Dred Scott decision. Roosevelt repeatedly linked his New Nationalism and his third-party candidacy for the Presidency on the Progressive ticket with the heritage of Abraham Lincoln.

All this was too much for the living link to the Sixteenth President, Robert Todd Lincoln, to swallow. Though he rarely engaged in public disputes over the meaning of his father's life, Robert, a Taft Republican, felt that he had to answer Theodore Roosevelt. The resulting public letter from Lincoln's son is a remarkable document which testifies to the changes in the Lincoln family's political beliefs over the years.

The Government under which my father lived was, as it is now, a republic, or representative democracy, checked by the Constitution which can be changed by the people, but only when acting by methods which compel deliberation and exclude so far as possible the effect of passionate and short-sighted impulse. A Government in which the checks of an established Constitution are actually, or practically omitted — one in which the people act in a mass directly on all questions and not through their chosen representatives — is an unchecked democracy, a form of Government so full of danger, as shown by history, that it has ceased to exist except in communities small and concentrated as to space. A New England town meeting may be good, but such a Government in a large City or State, would be chaos.

As I understand it, the essence of Mr. Roosevelt's proposals is that we shall adopt the latter form of Government in place of the existing form. This, in simple words, is a proposed revolution, peaceful perhaps, but a revolution.

Robert thought that such a revolution would "surely... lead to attempted dictatorships."

Robert not only disagreed politically with the form of government he thought Roosevelt was promoting but also believed that Roosevelt was in error in asserting that there were Abraham Lincoln texts which supported such doctrine. "President Lincoln," said his son, "wrote many letters, made many public addresses and was the author of many documents. I do not know of the existence in any of them of a word of censure, or of complaint of our Government, or of the methods by which it was carried on." Roosevelt's proposal for the recall of judicial decisions brought a specific response:

His [Lincoln's] attitude toward the Dred Scott decision is urged as in support of the pernicious project for the recall by popular vote, of judges and of judicial decisions. He thought it an erroneous decision, but his chief point in reference to it was not its error, but that it indicated a scheme, and was a part of it, for the nationalization of human slavery. He never suggested a change in our government under which the judges who made it should be recalled, but said that he would resist it politically by voting, if in his power, for an act prohibiting slavery in United States territories, and then endeavor to have the act sustained in a new proceeding, by the same court reversing itself.

Finally, Robert interpreted the Gettysburg Address for Roosevelt by asserting that, when Lincoln "prayed (if I may use the word) that 'Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth,' he meant, and could only mean, that government under which he lived, a representative government of balanced executive, legislative and judicial parts, and not something entirely different — an unchecked democracy."

The great irony, if not tragedy, of this misunderstanding between Robert T. Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt was that both men sincerely revered Abraham Lincoln's legacy and that both were quite knowledgeable about him. To be sure, Roosevelt said always that Lincoln and Washington were the greatest men our republic had produced. Even when he spoke at the dedication of Gutzon Borglum's Lincoln statue in Newark in 1912, Roosevelt complimented the people of Newark for commemorating "in fit form one of the two greatest statesmen that this country has ever had." It seems as though it was almost a political effort always to mention Lincoln and Washington together. Sectionalism may have been strong enough and Lincoln's image partisan enough still to necessitate paying homage to a Virginia hero as well.

Lincoln grew more "progressive" over the years in Roosevelt's view, and he apparently grew progressively more important for Roosevelt. In private utterances, Roosevelt seemed less reluctant to mention Lincoln without at the same time recalling Washington's memory. Close association with John Hay, who served as Secretary of State under Roosevelt, certainly increased his interest in Lincoln. After Hay's death in 1905, Roosevelt told Lyman Abbot:

John Hay's house was the only house in Washington where I continually stopped. Every Sunday on the way back from



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FIGURE 2. Robert Todd Lincoln.

church I would stop and have an hour's talk with Hay. We would go over foreign affairs and public business generally, and then I would usually get him to talk to me about Lincoln — for as you know, Lincoln has always meant more to me than any other of our public men, even Washington.

That same year, Hay had sent Roosevelt a ring to wear at his inauguration as President of the United States.

DEAR THEODORE:

The hair in this ring is from the head of President Lincoln. Dr. Taft cut it off the night of the assassination and I got it from his son — a brief pedigree.

Please wear it tomorrow; you are one of the men who most thoroughly understand and appreciate Lincoln.

I have had your monogram and Lincoln's engraved on the ring.

Longas, O uitinam, bone dux, ferias Praestes Hesperiae

Yours affectionately

JOHN HAY

In Roosevelt's *Autobiography*, written in 1913 at the height of his Progressivism, he recalled Hay's gift:

John Hay was one of the most delightful of companions, one of the most charming of all men of cultivation and action. Our views on foreign affairs coincided absolutely; but, as was natural enough, in domestic matters he felt much more conservative than he did in the days when as a young man he was private secretary to the great radical democratic leader of the '60's, Abraham Lincoln. . . . When I was inaugurated on March 4, 1905, I wore a ring he sent me the evening before, containing the hair of Abraham Lincoln. The ring was on my finger when the Chief Justice administered to me the oath of allegiance to the United States; I often thereafter told John Hay that when I wore such a ring on such an occasion I bound myself more than ever to treat the Constitution, after the manner of Abraham Lincoln, as a document which put human rights above property rights when the two conflicted.

Shortly before he gave his address on Lincoln in Hodgenville, Kentucky, on the hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth, Roosevelt told his son, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., "Lincoln is my great hero, as you know, and I have just put my heart into this speech."

Theodore Roosevelt did much to keep Lincoln in the public eye. As Roosevelt changed over time, so did his image of the Sixteenth President. At first he celebrated the practical moderate who injected popularity into the party of strong government. Later, Roosevelt invoked the image of a radical democrat who kept the country's vital principles alive by inventive applications of them to a changed political environment. Through it all, Roosevelt's degree of interest in Lincoln grew in intensity. Even though publicly he was careful to tout Lincoln and Washington together as America's two greatest heroes, in private he admitted, "For some reason or other he [Lincoln] is to me infinitely the most real of the dead Presidents." Washington gained only a sort of obligatory fealty from Roosevelt. He never engaged Roosevelt's rhetorical attention as Lincoln did. Theodore Roosevelt admired Washington as a statue, but he admired Lincoln as a man.

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by Mary Jane Hubler

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LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

1979-22

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Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10 1/8" x 7 1/8", 141-220 pp., illus., price per single issue, \$3.00.

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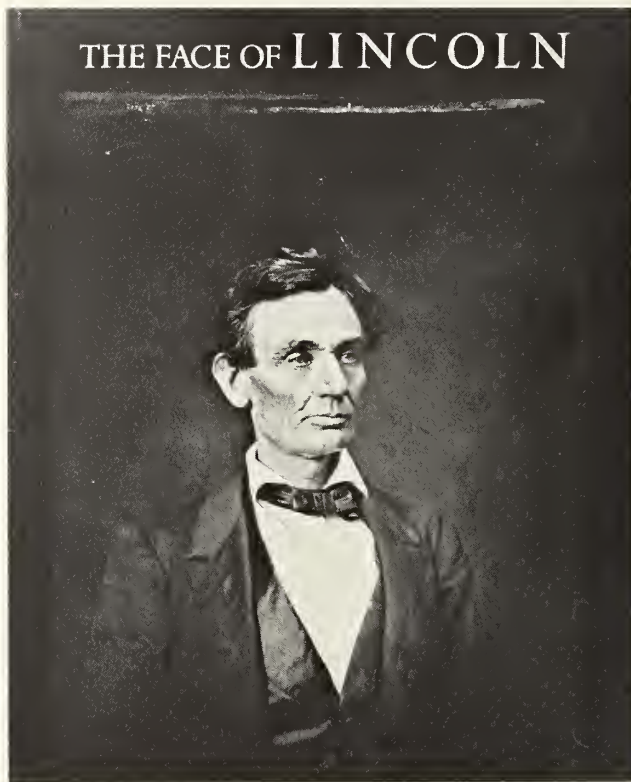
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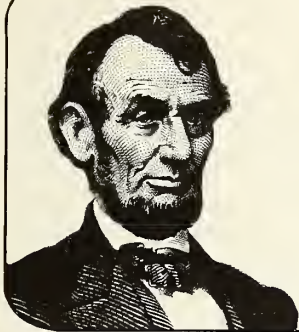
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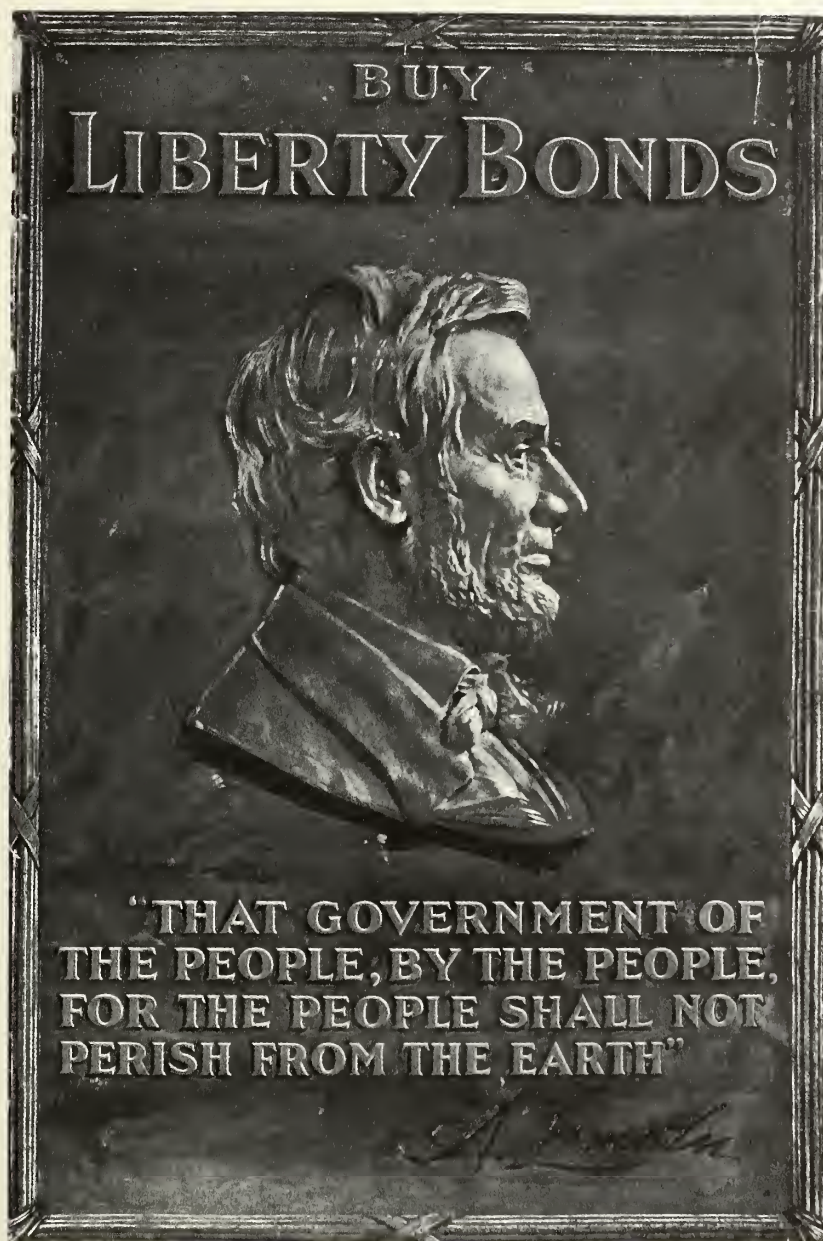
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Of Tangled Stories and Charnwood's *Lincoln*



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 1. The centennial celebration of Lincoln's birth in 1909 helped make Lincoln's image a powerful national symbol. By the time of World War I, Lincoln's face appeared frequently in war propaganda. In the same era, Charnwood's *Lincoln* helped make him an international figure.

Godfrey Rathbone Benson, Lord Charnwood, was an unlikely Lincoln biographer. The British upper classes were notoriously pro-Southern during the American Civil War, and he was born in that station in life in 1864. He did well at Oxford University, where he was later a tutor. He became a Member of Parliament and the Mayor of Lichfield.

After his graduation from Oxford in 1887, Charnwood made a tour of the United States. He returned briefly—to Boston and New York—in 1894. In politics, he was a Liberal. He was obviously interested in the United States, and, as a boy, he had read Charles G. Leland's *Abraham Lincoln*, a book memorable enough to be mentioned in the brief bibliographical note at the end of Charnwood's biography of Lincoln.

Charnwood's *Abraham Lincoln* was published in England in 1916. Available evidence suggests that his boyhood interest in Lincoln, his acquaintance with and admiration for the United States, and his liberal political leanings helped lead him to writing the book. The date of its publication, however, more strongly suggests that the atmosphere of co-operation between the United States and England, which grew up at the time of the First World War, must have played a large role in molding a sympathetic interest into the drive to write a substantial book on Abraham Lincoln.

The result, as all Lincoln students are aware, was wonderful. George Bernard Shaw told Lincoln collector Judd Stewart that Charnwood's "very penetrating biography" created "a cult of Lincoln in England." Its reception in America, following its publication there in 1917, was equally enthusiastic. The enthusiasm, as Paul M. Angle later noted, was lasting and pointed to merits in the work beyond its timeliness for the period of the final thaw in Anglo-American relations. In 1935 Roy P. Basler thought that Carl Sandburg and Nathaniel Wright Stephenson presented "the best version of the private Lincoln," but Charnwood's was still "the best of the public Lincoln." As late as 1947, Benjamin P. Thomas, an excellent judge of such matters, called Charnwood's book "the best one-volume life of Lincoln ever written."

Lincoln students may be a little unclear in regard to the precise reason Charnwood wrote his book, but they are unanimous on the reasons for its high reputation and popularity. David M. Potter's *The Lincoln Theme and American National Historiography* identified these clearly. No Lincoln biography before



Courtesy Adams National Historic Site
(from the *Dictionary of American Portraits*, published by Dover Publications, Inc., in 1967)

FIGURE 2. Henry Adams.

Charnwood's was "genuinely contemplative." Charnwood's *Lincoln*, as it is usually called, was. Paul M. Angle's *A Shelf of Lincoln Books* put it this way: "... it is not primarily factual, as for example, Nicolay's *Short Life* is factual. The emphasis is rather upon interpretation and analysis." Potter also pointed to the book's "notable literary excellence." Angle credited Charnwood with bringing "literary skill to the Lincoln theme," far exceeding the prosaic Nicolay and Hay or the hasty journalistic style of Ida Tarbell. Potter found "especial merit" in Charnwood's ability "to grasp the universality of Lincoln's significance." Angle also noted the Englishman's "conviction that Lincoln was one of the world's truly great men." Though critics did not say so explicitly, this trait set the book apart from the narrow nationalism even of contemporary biographers as talented as Stephenson and Albert Beveridge.

Charnwood was sympathetic, but he wrote from a cultural distance that Midwesterners like William Herndon, Jesse Weik, John Nicolay, and John Hay lacked perforce. This exempted Charnwood from a kind of partisanship that no American at the time seemed able to escape. Potter saw in this the root of Charnwood's unembarrassed ability to ask the "hard" questions about Lincoln:

Did Lincoln temporize too much on slavery? Was there a quality of "cheap opportunism" in his political record? Did his policy at Fort Sumter differ from Buchanan's enough to justify the customary practice of gibbeting the silly old man while leaving Lincoln free from criticism? Was he, in the last analysis, responsible for precipitating the Civil War?

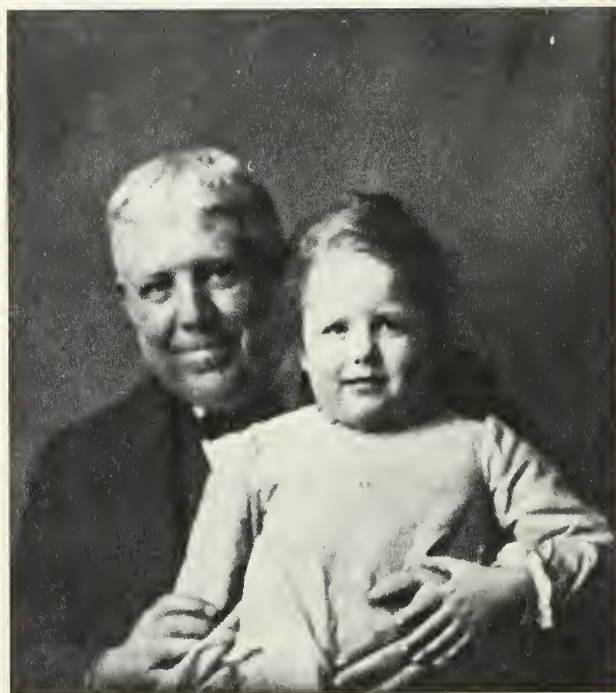
Lord Charnwood admitted that he did not "shrink... from the display of a partisanship" that led him to state frankly that the South's cause was wrong. What made his book exceptional was, as Potter stated, that Charnwood at least asked the questions. What also made the book good was Charnwood's view—as accurate today as it was in 1916—that the "true obligation of impartiality is that he [the author] should conceal no fact which, in his own mind, tells against his views." His was not the advocate's effort to pile up all the facts that help his argument but the fair-minded historian's

attempt to answer those arguments which seem most telling against his own case.

Charnwood, therefore, was never afraid to criticize Lincoln. Relying on the inaccurate literature available at the time, for example, Charnwood pictured Lincoln's father as "a migrant" and claimed that the "unseemliness in talk of rough, rustic boys flavoured the great President's conversation through life." (He saw, more accurately, that Lincoln was "void of romantic fondness for vanished joys of youth.") He labeled Lincoln's use of martial law in the North a usurpation of power.

Charnwood did no original research for the book and relied for facts on a small number of standard works, but he was a well-read man who used his generally cultured background to good effect. In a passage of marvelous irony, the learned Englishman criticized one of America's own great critics of democracy, Henry Adams, by saying, "It is a contemptible trait in books like that able novel 'Democracy,' that they treat the sentiment which attached to the 'Rail-splitter' as anything but honourable." Less accurate in the long run but appealing in the period of the book's greatest popularity was the viewpoint Charnwood derived from reading James Bryce's *American Commonwealth*. That critique of American politics made Charnwood hostile to political parties and the spoils system that Lincoln used so well. Charnwood saw American party politics as avoiding serious issues and largely incapable of producing great leaders. Of Lincoln's election in 1860, he said that "the fit man was chosen on the very ground of his supposed unfitness."

Lord Charnwood appreciated Lincoln's common origins, but he dwelled particularly on Lincoln's statesmanship. Secession, to Charnwood, was a broadly popular movement in the South aimed at saving slavery, and Lincoln's efforts to counter it were noble, progressive, and somehow Christian. Following a current of British military opinion at the time, he praised Lincoln's abilities as a commander in chief. He did not belittle the Emancipation Proclamation. It could be interpreted as a narrowly military measure only in law, Charnwood argued. Given the limited research he did for the biography, one is not surprised to learn that Charnwood repeated some spurious quotations and anecdotes. He often handled these well. Of the apocryphal story of Lincoln's clemency for the sleeping sentinel William Scott, Charnwood concluded: "If the story is not true—and there is no reason whatever to doubt it—still it is a remarkable man of whom



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 3. Jesse Weik.

people spin yarns of that kind." A man of deep religious interests himself, Charnwood noted Lincoln's growth in that realm to the "language of intense religious feeling" in the Second Inaugural Address.

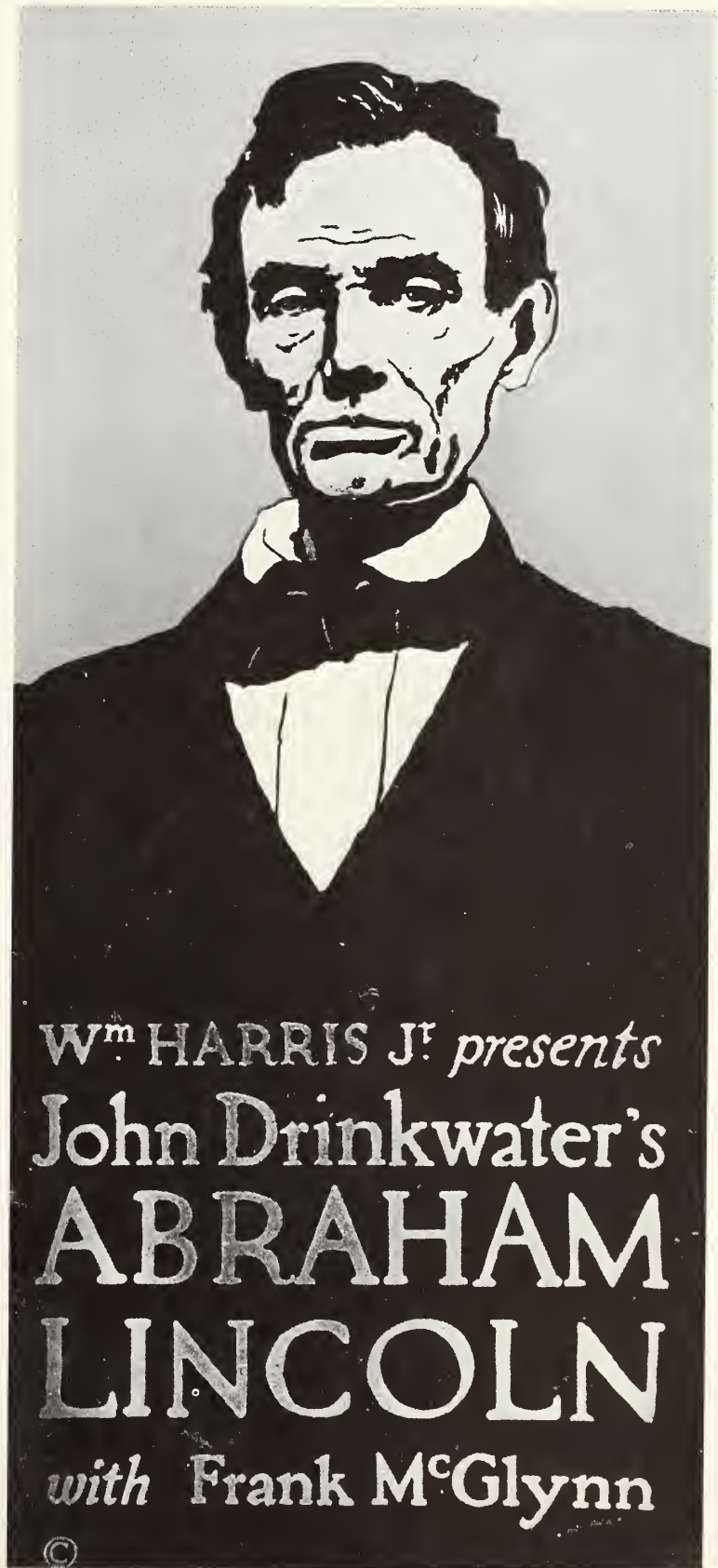
Charnwood kept his focus on the meaning of Lincoln's efforts to save the Union. These, he thought, were attempts to save democratic government for the whole world. He properly stressed Lincoln's praise for Henry Clay as a patriot who "loved his country, partly because it was his own country, and mostly because it was a free country."

Maintaining focus in a Lincoln biography was a real achievement, and focusing it on the truly important questions was Charnwood's greatest achievement. It is difficult to discover the means by which he did this because Charnwood letters are rather scarce in this country. This institution, though it seeks the letters of Lincoln's biographers, has not a single Charnwood letter. The Illinois State Historical Library has less than half a dozen. Among the later, however, there is one illuminating letter to Jesse W. Weik.

Written on May 17, 1919, just after Charnwood's triumphant lecture tour of the United States, the letter acknowledged Weik's gift of two Lincoln autographs for Lady Charnwood's autograph collection. Echoing a phrase from a famous Lincoln letter, Lord Charnwood characterized the gift as "such an addition . . . as she had never hoped to obtain, knowing that indeed Lincoln autographs are not plenty as blackberries." He apologized for the delay in writing. His younger son, eight years old, had been killed in a fall from a pony. He told Weik that the United States appeared much changed since his first visit thirty-one years before, "mainly . . . for the good."

Naturally, the letter soon got around to the subject of Abraham Lincoln. On his recent tour of the United States, Lord Charnwood wrote, "I came across, & indeed have been coming across ever since I published my book, many signs of the tendency, which had been active, to make a sort of stained-glass-window figure of Lincoln, quite removed from genuine human sympathy & impossible really to revere." He noted, tactfully, that Weik's own book, written with William Herndon, "made it impossible that such a tendency should lastingly prevail." In writing Weik, Charnwood diplomatically avoided commenting directly on the overall accuracy of the Herndon-Weik book. He said only that he had studied it carefully or that it prevented uncritical hero worship. Charnwood was careful thus to pay his "respects to one of the pioneer writers on the subject of which" Charnwood was "a junior student."

Charnwood's tour had brought him into contact with the controversies over Lincoln's ancestry, then raging in America. "The question," Charnwood commented, "is of little interest in itself,—not that heredity is an unimportant influence (for of course it is vastly important) but that its working is generally too subtle to be traced, that when we have the correct names of a great man's grand-parents & great-grand-parents (& how few of us can name all our great-grand-parents!) they generally remain mere names, and finally that nothing in his or any man's ancestry adds anything or detracts anything to or from his individual worth." Here again was Lord Charnwood at his tactful and ironic best—an Englishman, who did "not care two pence, or a cent (which is less) about the authority of this or any other pedigree (my own for example)," giving lessons on individualism to an American whose book had made rather a sensation for what it said about Lincoln's ancestry.



*From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 4. British playwright John Drinkwater drew inspiration for his popular play about Lincoln from Lord Charnwood's biography. The play was first performed in America in 1919.

"So," Charnwood said, "this question thoroughly bores me." Then, remembering the letter's recipient, he added a hasty parenthetical comment—"except that Lincoln's own interest in the subject is an interesting trait in him as Herndon & Weik record it." Still, having written a book about Lincoln, Charnwood felt that he might be "bound to know what there is to be known about it." Several questions followed for the sake of "antiquarian accuracy."

Charnwood had known of the questions surrounding Lincoln's Hanks ancestry when he wrote his book, and he queried Weik about new theories on the legitimacy of Lincoln's mother. In America, Charnwood had been astonished to learn that some raised questions about Lincoln's own legitimacy. "My time at Springfield," Charnwood said, "(in which I met some delightful people of the older generation who gave me, though without much detail a vivid impression of old times) was a little too much taken up with hearing tangled stories in which this question [of Lincoln's legitimacy] got mixed up with the other which I have spoken of [the question of Lincoln's mother's legitimacy]." One man in particular had been much taken with the notion that Lincoln was descended from John Marshall. "I think my friend," Charnwood went on, "is merely suffering from a variety of the same disease which makes others desire to derive Lincoln from wholly respectable people of [as] good standing as possible. He can not suffer it that a great man should have arisen without some ancestor of manifest intellectual eminence." Charnwood was "inclined to treat the idea as rubbish," but he still wanted to know whether there was anything to it.

Lord Charnwood concluded his letter thus:

I feel almost ashamed to have filled up my letter with questions which are of no importance in comparison with the actual life & work & character of the man who was any way Abraham Lincoln whoever his ancestors were.

Never afraid to ask questions or hear answers that might change his mind, Lord Charnwood nevertheless kept his focus always on the essentials of Lincoln's greatness.

Lloyd Ostendorf Joins Bibliography Committee

Lloyd Ostendorf of Dayton, Ohio, will join the Bibliography Committee which passes judgment on the inclusion of items in *Lincoln Lore's* Cumulative Bibliography. Born in Dayton on June 23, 1921, Mr. Ostendorf graduated from Stivers High School in his home town in 1939. He began studying art after his graduation. He attended the Dayton Art Institute from 1939 to 1941. He spent the summer of 1940 in New York City, studying with cartoonist Milton Caniff and his associates. In 1941 Mr. Ostendorf enlisted in the Army Air Corps, with which he served until 1945.

The war interrupted Mr. Ostendorf's career in illustration and portrait work which began in 1939. He has furnished art work for many different publications and projects, and much of it has focused on Abraham Lincoln. Fascinated by the "oddly balanced ruggedness and beauty" of Lincoln's face, he began drawing pictures of Lincoln when he was twelve years old. His attention naturally turned to the photographs of Lincoln which he copied and adapted. Mr. Ostendorf got special encouragement in his work from Louis A. Warren, one of the few Lincoln authorities at the time interested in encouraging work with Lincoln pictures. As he sought photographs from which to work, Mr. Ostendorf also came into contact with Frederick Hill Meserve, the first great student and collector of Lincoln photographs. Meserve was "as nice as an old man could be to a young man" who shared his interest, Mr. Ostendorf remembers.

Mr. Ostendorf's first book *A Picture Story of Abraham Lincoln* (1962), a biography for young readers, was so popular that it has been reissued by Lamplight Publishing, Inc., as *Abraham Lincoln: The Boy and the Man*. His next work was

Lincoln in Photographs: An Album of Every Known Pose (1963), which he wrote with Charles Hamilton. This book, essential to even the smallest Lincoln library, is still available from the University of Oklahoma Press. Hardly a week passes in which the staff of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum fails to consult this fine book to answer questions about Lincoln photographs and the many lithographs and engravings inspired by them, and this is surely true of every other Lincoln institution as well.

Mr. Ostendorf's expertise in this very specialized but popular area of Lincolniana has been widely recognized. Lincoln Memorial University awarded him the Lincoln Diploma of Honor in 1966. Lincoln College awarded him an honorary degree (Litt. D.) in 1968, and Lincoln Memorial University added another (Art. D.) in 1974. He has been the art editor of the *Lincoln Herald* since 1957, and all Lincoln students are familiar with the wonderfully varied covers he provides for that quarterly journal. He was also an honorary member of the National Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission.

Mr. Ostendorf, in addition to illustrating greeting cards and religious materials, maintains his interest in Lincolniana. He recently completed a painting of Lincoln's stepmother for the Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center in Mattoon, Illinois. Another recent portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln as a young woman hangs in the restored Todd home in Lexington, Kentucky. Studying photographs in order to determine what historical figures looked like in periods when no photographs of them are available is a special interest. Mr. Ostendorf has also been working on three books: a study of Lincoln portraits from life (with Harold Holzer); the recollections of Mariah Vance, a Lincoln family maid in Springfield (with David Balsiger); and a Lincoln family photograph album (with James T. Hickey).

Over the years, Mr. Ostendorf's interests have grown from Lincoln's physical appearance to all aspects of his life. His general knowledge and his special expertise make him a most welcome addition to the advisory board.



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FIGURE 5. Lloyd Ostendorf

